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Drugs, Dealers, Danger...Just a Click Away. Are You Watching Your Teens Online? ...*Who Is?*

The Internet unsupervised can be a world of temptation. Pushers peddling pills and make-it-yourself drug recipes. Dealers glorifying marijuana. Bogus "pharmacies" filling orders without prescriptions. "Friends" sending text or instant messages about which parties will have pot or alcohol.

With all the advantages they bring, these technologies, such as Web sites, blogs, spam and text messages, can also expose teens to threats like dangerous drugs and put them in contact with dealers or sexual predators. What can you do? More importantly, what should you do? Parents need to monitor their teens' activities and help them navigate the temptations in the digital world. Here's how:

Learn about the digital devices your teen uses. Visit his Web page or send a text message to her cell phone.

Be clear and consistent about what is off limits — including which Web sites, chat rooms, games or blogs — and how to handle information promoting drugs or sex. Discuss consequences for breaking these rules.

Use technology to help monitor your teen. See for yourself what's posted on social networking sites your teen visits by setting up your own account. Use text messaging to check in with your teen after school.

Know whom your teen is communicating with. Ask who is on his/her cell phone and instant message contact lists. Use every available opportunity to meet and get to know their friends and their parents.

Limit your teen's time spent online, and put computers in a common area of the house so you can more easily monitor their use.

Above all, don't feel uncomfortable with these tactics. You can do it. You're supposed to do it. Because you owe it to them. **For more e-monitoring tips and information on how to use technology to keep your teen drug-free, visit www.TheAntiDrug.com, or call 1-800-788-2800.**

Signed,

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CORRESPONDENCE

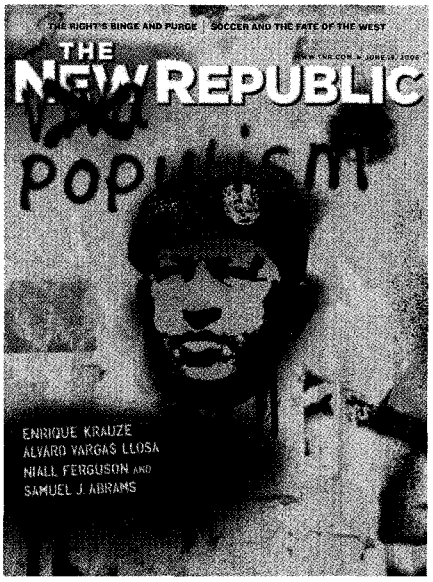
ICKY POP

NIALL FERGUSON AND SAMUEL J. Abrams claim that anti-immigrant feeling in Europe stems from an illiberal, racist, and xenophobic populism that is especially pronounced in countries where people "most strongly support the proposition that immigrants should embrace the culture of their adoptive countries" ("Pop Up," June 19). Is that an unreasonable expectation? Aren't there elements of Muslim culture that, in the interest of liberal values, Europeans should *not* be prepared to welcome? Polygamy? Female circumcision? Honor killings of women in cases of adultery and rape? Arranged and forced marriages? Resistance to school curricular requirements and the sending of Muslim children to madrassas in their countries of origin? Failure to countenance free speech? The sanctioning of murderous actions when that culture is not accepted? In fact, as the author George Weigel has written, the European response to Muslim culture has been one of appeasement in large and small things, including the self-censorship of newspapers in the matter of Danish caricatures, the segregation by sex of French swimming pools, and the forbidding of Dutch flags (deemed provocative to immigrants) on the backpacks of schoolchildren. There are admirable aspects of Muslim art and culture. But, as for those Muslims who want to live in Europe but refuse to abide by fundamental liberal values, Europeans should be no more accepting of the cruel elements of their culture than Americans, in the fullness of time, were of the claims of Southern slaveholders that slavery was decent and humane.

RICHARD W. JENCKS
Mill Valley, California

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

IN HIS EXCELLENT REVIEW OF *THE Idea of the Self*, Charles Larmore writes, "We would not count as believing [that the cat is on the mat] if we were indifferent to its implications, walking across the mat as though nothing were there" ("The Thinking Thing," June 19). The implausibility of this claim is shown by changing "that the cat is on the mat" to "that a toad is on the road" and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Pop
ENRIQUE KRAUZE
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"walking across the mat" to "driving across his path." In Larmore's view, motorists who proceed in this fashion, as they often do, necessarily have poor eyesight or are otherwise unable to form the belief in question. But this is absurd. So it must be the case that they don't lack the belief. Rather, they're indifferent with respect to it and act accordingly.

STEVEN M. SANDERS
Franklin, Massachusetts

CHARLES LARMORE RESPONDS:
But a cat is not a toad, nor is walking the same as driving, and the implications of our beliefs about these matters differ accordingly. We would not (I hope) run over a cat without a second thought, nor (I suspect) walk across the mat in our usual way if we saw a toad there.

GOLDEN DOLE

TOO BAD WE DON'T HAVE A BOB DOLE handy right about now to push for the Darfur intervention the editors demand ("Again, Part II," June 19). As much as I disliked the former Republican senator, he deserves credit for forcing Bill Clinton to react to the genocide in the former Yugoslavia. Dole was a World War II veteran who was wounded in Italy trying to save his radioman. His heroism and battle injury earned the interest of Chicago surgeon and Armenian genocide survivor Hampar Kelikian, who operated on Dole for free. Kelikian told Dole of the genocide and Dole became aware of that awful crime. Although he lost the 1996 election, by pushing the issue of genocide in the Balkans, Dole forced Clinton to act or risk defeat. We need another Dole in the 2008 election.

AMANDA POLLAK
Kensington, Maryland

FOOTBALL FRENZY

MATT WEILAND'S EXCELLENT ARTICLE on the old soccer league brought back warm memories of the heady days of "my" Portland Timbers ("Kick Off," June 19). They were contenders when I was in high school and college, and they went to the Soccer Bowl. The whole city went crazy when they headed for the playoffs, and I spent a great night or two in a sleeping bag outside the stadium waiting for the chance for tickets. One of their wingers, Jimmy Kelly, from Northern Ireland, was only half-jokingly talked about for mayor (don't laugh—we elected a tavern owner, after all). Portland became known as "Soccer City, USA." Many players from around the world liked Portland so much that, after their careers ended, they retired to the city or started new careers here. While I'll admit I hated the New York Cosmos for their East Coast money, media attention, and what I saw as referee favoritism, I got the chance after a practice session one afternoon to meet Pelé and get his autograph. His attendants kept trying to usher him away, but he insisted on staying until everyone at least got to shake his hand. While the current league has more financial staying power than the NASL did, it has never been quite the same for me.

JASON FORD
San Diego, California

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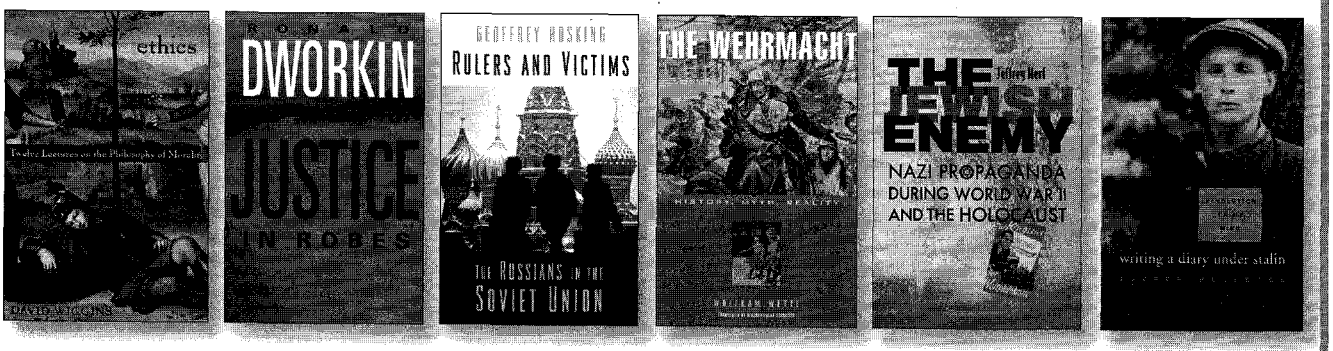

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Wall Eyed

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

READ ABOUT U.S. EFFORTS to seal the Mexican border, and you quickly encounter two words. The first is *futile*. Take this June 5 dispatch in *U.S. News & World Report*, which reports on the "deep sense of futility" about illegal immigration in the town of Nogales, on the Arizona-Mexico border. "The number of Border Patrol agents has increased more than 200 percent in less than 15 years. ... Yet the number of people estimated to cross the border illegally each year has remained fairly constant, at about half a million. Says Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik, 'I don't think anybody, anywhere, knows what it would take to secure the border.' "

The second word is *perverse*. A May 7 article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* reports that "[m]any experts believe that the current pattern of illegal immigration from Mexico and Central America was a consequence of the 1986 law's border tightening—followed by a tougher crackdown in 1996 that built fences in San Diego and El Paso. 'The perverse effect has been to dramatically lower return migration out of the country,' said Douglas S. Massey, a Princeton University sociologist ... by making border crossing 'very risky and unpleasant and increasingly expensive ... you make it more likely that migrants ... just hunker down and stay.' "

These words have a rich pedigree. In 1991, the great economist Albert O. Hirschman published *The Rhetoric of Reaction*, a study of conservative arguments against progressive reform dating back to the French revolution. And he divided them into three types. First, conservatives argued that liberal reforms always came to naught. In the 1850s, Alexis de Tocqueville insisted that the French Revolution, for all its sound and fury, had actually made little difference. In the 1890s, Vilfredo Pareto insisted that universal suffrage doesn't change the basic distribution of political power. In the 1970s, Milton Friedman declared that anti-poverty spending had virtually no impact on the lives of the poor. Hirschman called this the "futility" thesis.

He also noted a second kind of conservative argument. In 1793, Friedrich Schiller argued that the French Revolution had indeed made a difference: By trying to "install the holy Rights of Man," it had done the exact opposite, plunging France "into barbarism and servitude." A century later, after Great Britain extended voting rights to the working class, conservatives predicted that this, too, would have unintended consequences: It would destroy good government. And, almost a century after that, conservatives made the same argument against anti-poverty spending: It wasn't simply useless; it was counterproductive. As Charles Murray put it in 1984, "We tried to provide more for the poor and produced more poor instead." Hirschman gave this argument a name as well. He called it the "perversity" thesis.

Viewed through Hirschman's prism, today's immigration debate is downright bizarre. The United States doesn't allow nearly enough legal immigration to quench its massive thirst for cheap labor. Millions of Mexicans are willing—indeed, desperate—to provide that labor. And the U.S.-Mexican border is over 2,000 miles long. By the logic that conservatives have been using for hundreds of years, U.S. efforts to seal the border are virtually guaranteed to fail, backfire, or both. And yet it is today's "conservatives" who insist that it can—and must—be done.

The hottest idea on the American right today is a wall, stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. As it happens, the United States has already experimented with border walls. In the 1990s, it built them in two of the places that were experiencing the most illegal immigration, San Diego and El Paso—and succeeded in diverting illegal immigrants into the countryside, particularly in Arizona, which is now seized by the same immigration panic that convulsed California a decade ago. The walls went up; the Immigration and Naturalization Service saw its budget triple between 1993 and 2002; the Border Patrol doubled in size. And, according to the best estimates, the number of people illegally crossing from Mexico into the United States remained roughly the same.

But the effort wasn't merely futile; it was also perverse. By sending illegal immigrants across deserts and over mountains, the United States made their journey much more brutal. Border-crossing deaths are up eightfold over the last decade; far more people now die trying to cross into the United States than died trying to traverse the Berlin Wall. To survive their arduous journey, illegal immigrants pay large sums to human smugglers—many of them connected to gangs that have used their newfound wealth to launch a crime wave, particularly around Phoenix.

And, if those unintended consequences are not bad enough, the border crackdown has also convinced many illegal immigrants to stay in the United States—for fear that, if they return to Mexico, they'll never make it back. Since the '90s, according to one study, the average illegal immigrant's stay in the United States has doubled. And, when illegal immigrants lay down roots, they place a greater burden on America's social service system. In Massey's words, that means "increased costs to society for schools, housing, and medical care. We've accomplished the very thing we set out to avoid."

But "conservatives" are undeterred. If the United States extends a wall along the entire border, they insist, we will finally solve the problem. Yeah, right. There's a wall near Douglas, Arizona. As the town's mayor recently noted, it is punctured routinely. Illegal immigrants "brought a portable metal grinder to cut through. ... The fences may as well not exist to them." In recent years, American authorities have discovered dozens of tunnels under the border. One, running from Tijuana to San Diego, was a half-mile long, up to 80 feet deep, eight feet tall, had a concrete floor, and was wired for electricity. If Border Patrol blocks off all the tunnels, some experts predict illegal immigrants will start coming by boat. Or Mexican criminal gangs will turn their attention to far more sophisticated forging of immigration documents.

When market forces push strongly in one direction, government efforts to intercede usually fail or backfire. For a long time, that idea has helped define what it means to be a conservative. Someone should tell today's Republican Party.

PETER BEINART

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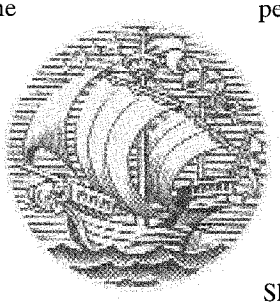
War Old and New

IT WOULD BE too charming to suggest that the Jewish state has now emerged as the protector of Sunni Islam, but there is no denying that the events in Lebanon have furnished a strategic illumination. Many people have observed with delight the varying degrees of solidarity with Israel's war against Hezbollah that have been expressed by Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and even the Arab League, which has now broken its perfect record of being on the wrong side of every crisis in the region. There is nothing pro-Zionist about this solidarity; not at all. Nor is it owed to a fair-minded recognition that Israel's war against Hezbollah is a response to Hezbollah's war against Israel. There is no fairness in the Middle East. No, this astonishing development is a conclusion drawn coldly and correctly from a strategic evaluation of the situation.

Even in the Arab world, it is obvious that what we are witnessing along the southern border of Lebanon is Iranian foreign policy. Without Iranian weapons and Iranian direction, Hezbollah's swagger would be hollow, and the Lebanese government might stand a chance of bringing Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah's fevered thugs under control. To be sure, Syria has continued to play a mischievous role in Lebanon after its expulsion in the wake of the Cedar pseudo-Revolution, but it, too, is an instrument of Tehran, which is its great patron in the region. It is said that Iran created this crisis so as to divert attention from the ongoing crisis of its nuclear development, and no doubt this is so. But the full truth is even grimmer. It is that Iran has now emerged as a regional power, that its power is increasing (this is one of the many unhappy consequences of the war in Iraq), and that it is more and more eager to show its power. Not even Khomeini did what Ahmadinejad has done.

Ahmadinejad's Iran is a problem for Israel because of the violence it can order from afar and because of its remorseless pursuit of weapons of mass destruction; but it is not only Israel's problem. The Sunni societies in the Middle East have taken notice of the Shia arousal that Iran (and Hezbollah) represents. Whether or not contemporary history is characterized by a clash of civilizations, it certainly includes a clash within a civilization—the Islamic one. In Iran, in Iraq, in Lebanon, politics and political violence are now inspired not least by an ancient internecine hostility. Nothing else can explain the Saudi empathy for Israel in this war. (Now there's a sentence!)

The ascendancy of Ahmadinejad's perfidious Iran is a spectacular problem for the United States, and a spectacular challenge. Iran is now the single most powerful force arrayed against American ideals and interests in the Middle East. The various Islamist movements pose various threats; but here is Islamism incarnated in a large and ambitious state. For this reason, U.S. policy toward Iran must consist of more than an attempt to frustrate its nuclear designs. If we do not isolate Iran regionally and globally, if we do not do everything we can to support the democratizing forces in Iran, and of course if we do not move ruthlessly to prevent Iran from acquiring the deadliest arsenal of all, then we will have presided over the creation of a nightmare worse than the nightmare of Saddam Hussein. If we succeed in Iraq (a considerable if) and fail in Iran, we will have failed in the Middle East. Unfortunately, it is not clear that President Bush grasps this.



But we must have no illusions. The old reactionary alignments are likely to reassert themselves soon. The Israeli-Islamist war may have clarified the region, but it has not recreated it. Israel certainly cannot wager its security on an epiphany in Riyadh. For the time being, then, the surest way to defeat Tehran is to defeat Hezbollah. Hezbollah's accumulation of its arsenal has, for a long time, been a scandal—a war waiting to happen; and its role as the aggressor in the present crisis is clear. There is no principle or interest that should require Israel to live forever with this threat. If the Israeli campaign against Hezbollah does not decisively cripple the movement and its army, there will be no peace to speak of along Israel's northern border—and no country to speak of beyond it. As long as Hezbollah is unbroken, Lebanon is unformed. To be sure, it is not Israel's responsibility to fix Lebanon (this was one of Ariel Sharon's mistakes in 1982, during the Lebanon war, and Ehud Olmert seems determined not to repeat it), but let there be no mistake: Israel's victory will be Lebanon's victory. It would be heartless not to recoil against the civilian casualties that this war is claiming, but it would be mindless not to affirm the rightness of this struggle against the madmen and their rockets. ■

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Can Lieberman survive?

Cuppa Joe

BY JASON ZENGERLE

CONNECTICUT MAY HAVE fewer natural wonders than, say, New Jersey, but what it lacks in physical beauty it more than makes up for in diners. The Nutmeg State has an abundance of them, wherein residents can feast on hearty fare like scrambled eggs, mac and cheese, and, lately, Joe Lieberman. As he fights for his political life against millionaire cable TV executive Ned Lamont, Lieberman has evidently decided to make his last stand in the humble greasy spoon. And so, one recent morning, Connecticut's junior senator was in the small southwestern town of Ansonia at Millie's II—one of five diners he would visit that day—laboring to convince its patrons to send him back to Washington for a fourth term.

Lieberman does not have the physical gifts of a natural politician. With his slight frame and oddly hollow voice, he has a hard time commanding a room. But, as he methodically made his way around the diner, he did a fairly convincing imitation of the backslapping, glad-handing pol he has never been. Standing at the lunch counter, Lieberman reminded patrons that Ansonia and the surrounding towns had provided him with his margin of victory in his first Senate race in 1988. "I really hope you're able do it again," he said. Squeezing into a booth, he patiently listened to a woman as she told him her idea for having the runner-up in the presidential race automatically become vice president. "There's too much partisanship," he eventually said, seconding her point without quite endorsing her proposal. And, when a large man chomping on an unlit stogie—a local character who goes by the name "Bobby Z"—came up to Lieberman and declared, "You shouldn't have to be putting up with this, 'f' them!" the senator didn't blanch. Instead, he smiled broadly and gave Bobby Z a hug. As Lieberman exited Millie's II, the diners gave him a resounding cheer. It seemed that, at the very least, he'd sewn up the support of the breakfast crowd.

The question facing Lieberman, though, is whether this performance was a case of too little too late. As he heads toward his August 8 Democratic primary showdown with Lamont, the incumbent faces the very real prospect of defeat. Public polls have showed Lieberman holding an ever-shrinking lead; and, according to a source, one unpublished independent poll actually had Lieberman trailing Lamont, albeit within the poll's margin of error. Indeed, Lieberman is in such jeopardy that, in early July, he announced that, should he lose the primary, he will run as an Independent in November's general election.

If Lieberman does lose the Democratic primary, his defeat will mean many things to many people. Some will view it as a resounding sign of the Democratic Party's anger over the Iraq war, of which Lieberman has been a prominent proponent. Others will contend that it is a concrete manifestation of the power of liberal bloggers, many of whom have made opposing Lieberman and supporting Lamont their raison d'être. And some will even go so far as to argue that it spells the end of the Democratic Party as we know it—which, depending on who's doing the arguing, will be viewed as either a good or a bad thing.

But, while all these interpretations may be true to some degree, the fundamental reason for Lieberman's travails—a reason that a number of the senator's friends and supporters are increasingly willing to share—is Lieberman himself. Despite efforts to imbue the senator's troubles with greater significance, in reality they are largely the result of his and his reelection campaign's own missteps—from his behavior prior to the race to his belated realization of the serious challenge Lamont posed to his continued insistence on doing things that served to anger Democratic voters. "I think it's a mess," one Lieberman friend says of the campaign. "And, frankly, I think much of the blame lies with Joe. ... It's almost like he goes out of his way sometimes to make a difficult situation more difficult."

THE STORY OF Lieberman's undoing begins, most of his friends and supporters agree, with his ill-fated 2004 presidential campaign. Thanks to his well-received performance as Al Gore's running mate in 2000, many people—including, apparently, Lieberman himself—believed him to be the 2004 front-runner. But his candidacy quickly foundered, largely because of the war. He was embarrassed when Gore endorsed Howard Dean, whom Lieberman had singled out for particularly harsh criticism, and it wasn't long before his campaign's slogan of "Joementum" became an unintentional punch line. After failing to win nine primary contests, Lieberman withdrew from the race.

Those around Lieberman believe that his defeat took a personal toll. "Anybody who runs for president and loses, it changes you," says a former senior adviser. "You put yourself out there, and there are people who had always been there for you, and you go to them, and all of a sudden they don't show up. It changes your perception of the reality of politics."

Lieberman's hangover from his 2004 flameout manifested itself in a couple of ways. First, there was his deteriorating relationship with Connecticut. Like any long-serving senator, Lieberman had become increasingly distant from the state he represents—particularly in recent years, when he was primarily focused on national politics. Lieberman hardly campaigned for his reelection to the Senate in 2000, for instance, spending most of his time running for vice president. And, after losing his presidential race, Lieberman, rather than plunging back into Connecticut politics, seemed

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inclined to retreat from politics altogether. Although he still worked to win his state earmarks—and successfully fought to keep the U.S. Navy's submarine base in New London open—he didn't engage in the hand-holding and temperature-taking that is important in a state where the remnants of a Democratic Party machine hold considerable sway. A Connecticut supporter of Lieberman's puts it bluntly: "Look, he went national and he stopped paying attention to people in Connecticut," the supporter says. "If the relationships that Joe had throughout the state were good twelve months ago, those people would have gone to Lamont and said, 'You are not running.' But they didn't do that."

More significant than his problems with his home state, Lieberman's 2004 defeat caused him problems with his party. "I'm a Truman-Kennedy-Clinton Democrat, which is progressive domestically and strong on foreign and defense policy," Lieberman told me. "I want to give voice to the Truman-Kennedy-Clinton tradition within the party, which I think is receding, at least at the activist level, because of the hatred toward President Bush and the strong opposition to the war." A former adviser frames the same point in a more negative way: "The [2004 presidential campaign] experience left him very embittered. He was very chastened by the response he got. I think, for the last couple of years, he's been feeling like, 'Where's the room for me in this party?' I think it may have clouded his judgment."

That judgment became particularly clouded on Iraq. While many of his friends and supporters admire Lieberman's willingness to take a principled stand in supporting the war—even if they themselves disagree with that stand—they cannot understand why he hasn't been more critical of the Bush administration's handling of the war. "You can be for the war and be critical of it, and he lost the second half of the equation," says one former adviser. "Look at Biden. Here's somebody who voted for the war, continues to say that we should be there, but is absolutely critical of Bush and how he handled it. And so, as a result, he gets a pass. It's how Lieberman talks about the war that people can't stand. He comes across as not necessarily being pro-war but being pro-Bush."

"It's not only an ideological thing. It's a temperament thing," says another former adviser, explaining Lieberman's approach to politics in general. "He really does believe that there's a bipartisan sort of consensus. That attitude worked for him politically in Connecticut for the last 30 years, and it worked for him nationally in the 1990s. But now the earth has shifted. One, I don't think the Bush Republicans play that way. And, two, most people in the Democratic Party don't want anything to do with that attitude."

Exacerbating this problem has been Lieberman's staff. "He's got a staff now that's very knowledgeable in their substantive areas," says one Lieberman friend. "But there's not a lot of political smarts there." A number of Lieberman's friends and supporters cite his November 2005 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed backing Bush's strategy in Iraq and urging Democrats to do the same—which Lamont said triggered his decision to enter the race—as a perfect example of something Lieberman's staff should have prevented from happening. "He needed someone to say to him, 'Senator, I hear you're going to write an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* about Iraq,'" argues one former adviser. "'I know you have your opinions, but the filing deadline for a challenger is six weeks away. Shut the hell up for six weeks.'"

Others point to his campaign's sputtering start. For months, the campaign did little to combat Lamont's—and his supporters'—caricature of Lieberman as "George Bush's favorite Democrat." "His politics can't be boiled down to a bumper sticker," says one former adviser, "but he allowed himself to become a bumper sticker." The campaign was also slow to bring much scrutiny on Lamont himself. And, when it finally did in June—cutting an amateurish cartoon ad attacking Lamont for his close ties to former Connecticut Senator and Governor Lowell Weicker—the effort was almost laughably bad. "That ad was retarded," says one Democratic Senate aide sympathetic to Lieberman.

THE OVERWHELMINGLY NEGATIVE response to the ad may have served as something of a wake-up call. Many of the same people who have been disappointed with Lieberman and his campaign believe that both may be finally getting things together—pointing to Lieberman's aggressive performance in his July 7 debate with Lamont and the campaign's recent efforts to reach out to former Lieberman aides for help. "I was contacted by the campaign for the first time—other than fundraising appeals—about two or three weeks ago," says a former senior adviser to Lieberman. "I don't know what they want me to do. If me going up there and knocking on doors will help, I'll go knock on doors." Even if Lieberman does lose in the Democratic primary, his supporters are now

DAVID COWLES

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more confident that he'll win the general election.

What brought about the change? A number of the Lieberman supporters I spoke with believe some of the credit goes to Connecticut's senior senator, Chris Dodd, who is said to have taken an increasingly active role in the campaign in recent weeks. "I believe he's given Joe some very tough talk and some very sound advice," says John Droney, a former chairman of the Connecticut Democratic Party. "He's expressed his views to Joe as to what he needs to do to win in no uncertain terms."

Others give the credit to Lieberman himself. After a shaky start, they believe he's finally rising to the challenge. "He's not depressed, he's not sad, he's not down—he *is* furious," says Lanny Davis, a friend of Lieberman's who has been assisting the campaign. "I've been there with him since his first campaign in 1970, and I've never seen him this angry."

Occasionally, that anger even comes into public view. When I spoke with Lieberman, he had a difficult time hiding his frustration with Lamont, whom he seemed to consider both a lightweight and a phony. "Look, he's coming to this at a difficult time with very little experience in government," Lieberman said of his challenger. "And, more fundamentally, his record in Greenwich town government [where Lamont served as a selectman in the 1990s], which was fairly conservative ... is so different from what he is now in this campaign—as he saw the opportunity to become a senator—that I don't know what he would do as a senator."

But, even in the midst of a tough campaign, Lieberman tends to keep things light—"the consummate happy warrior," as one of his former advisers calls him. After diners, Lieberman's favorite stop on the campaign trail seems to be town halls, where he typically receives an enthusiastic reception from local Democratic officials eager to get a few minutes of face time with a man who, for the moment at least, can steer federal dollars toward their various projects. On a recent afternoon in the small town of Thomaston, Lieberman offered a steady stream of one-liners—and elicited hearty chuckles—as he met with various local officials. In the assessor's office, he eagerly dug into a bowl of candy and joked, "She needs to have candy to offer troubled taxpayers." When he met a local probate judge who was running for reelection unopposed, Lieberman feigned jealousy. "This was a dream of mine," he said, clutching his heart, "not yet achieved."

Finally, Lieberman found his way to the town clerk's office. There, he asked the clerk about whether many people were coming in to register for the Democratic primary. Yes, she replied, but then she noted a strange anomaly: Lately, a number of those who'd been trying to register for the Democratic primary were, in fact, Republicans; because it was less than three months before the primary, however, it was too late for them to switch parties. Lieberman, as always, was ready with a quip. "Those are probably my voters," he said. This time, nobody laughed. ■

CIA-bashers gone mad.

Mole People

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN

ALL THAT WAS missing was the flight suit and the aircraft carrier. On June 21, Senator Rick Santorum joined Representative Pete Hoekstra, the suave Michigan Republican who chairs the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, to make a surprising revelation. "We have found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—chemical weapons," Santorum announced at a joint press conference. His evidence? A just-declassified study by the Army's National Ground Intelligence Center (NGIC) noting that 500 chemical munitions shells had been unearthed near the Iranian border.

Unfortunately for Hoekstra and Santorum, the shells weren't part of Saddam Hussein's illusory stockpile of WMD. Rather, they were artifacts of the Iran-Iraq war, during which Saddam (helped, incidentally, by the Reagan administration) acquired chemical weapons. Panicked intelligence officials, worried about another Iraq-WMD misinformation fiasco, immediately told reporters that "there is not new news."

And that's when Hoekstra and Santorum made the White House's battle with the CIA their own. On June 26, they took to the pages of *The Wall Street Journal* to unleash a larger allegation: that some officials in the intelligence community are attempting to destroy the Bush administration—and the United States itself. "People who leak the existence of sensitive intelligence programs like the terrorist surveillance program or financial tracking programs to either damage the administration or help al Qaeda, or perhaps both, are using the release or withholding of documents to advance their political desires," they wrote. In other words, the reason we haven't found out about Saddam's WMD is because Al Qaeda sympathizers in the intelligence community don't want us to know.

Welcome to the new smear. Previous GOP attacks on the intelligence community have merely alleged that Langley is full of Bush-haters. Now Hoekstra and Santorum are implying that the CIA contains not just liberal squishes but actual fifth columnists. "Good grief," sighs Jane Harman, Hoekstra's Democratic counterpart on the House intelligence committee. "I am not aware of anyone [in the intelligence community] who harbors sympathy for Al Qaeda. I think that is a reckless claim."

It's easy to see why Hoekstra and Santorum—and much of the conservative faithful—would like to believe that allegation. For Republicans, locked into supporting an unpopular war, convincing their constituencies that American

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troops need to die for an elusive Iraqi democracy is an increasingly tough sell. But the Bush administration, sensitive these days on the subject of crying wolf over WMD, has not embraced the unearthed shells. So the GOP Congress has resolved that someone else must rise to the challenge. It's not that Bush doesn't *want* to speak the WMD truth, Hoekstra and Santorum assured *Journal* readers. It's that he's "often paralyzed" by the intelligence bureaucracy and an irresponsible liberal press. The enemy within—that is, the Al Qaeda–cooperative intelligence community—cannot be allowed to prevail, Hoekstra and Santorum concluded. And, over the past few weeks, the dynamic duo, with the help of their GOP friends, has stepped up the campaign to stop them.

NOT LONG AGO, the conspiracy theory that Iraq harbored stockpiles of WMD at the outset of the war was reserved for cheap-hotel ballrooms packed with conservative conventioneers. (As in a February conference in Arlington, Virginia, that featured a panel on "Saddam's WMD Tapes: 'The Smoking Gun' Evidence.") Now it's being taken seriously in the halls of Congress. On June 29, the House Armed Services Committee held a surreal hearing on the NGIC report. A Virginia Republican named Thelma Drake suggested that Saddam's WMD might have been detonated just that morning in Israel by Palestinian terrorists. Not to be outdone, Pennsylvania's Curt Weldon defiantly rebutted the charge that the munitions were ancient history by referring to the U.N. resolutions demanding Iraq's disarmament: "It didn't say 'pre-'91 chemical weapons.' It didn't say 'post-'91 chemical weapons.' It said 'chemical weapons.' " A weary David Kay, the CIA's first postwar WMD-hunter, had the thankless task of informing the committee that "it really should not be a surprise to anyone that chemical munitions produced in Iraq between 1980 and, roughly, 1991 have been found there."

The campaign continued last Tuesday at the Heritage Foundation. There, addressing a panel of right-wing experts assembled to discuss so-called "new information" about prewar Iraq, Hoekstra emphasized the fact-finding part of his crusade. (Santorum backed out of the event last week for reasons his staff wouldn't explain, and he did not reply to requests for comment for this piece.) He demanded Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte release everything his office knows about Iraq, including tens of thousands of captured Saddam-era files and videotape, currently located in a U.S. warehouse in Qatar. It was clearly a tactic to appear less a conspiracy nut than a defender of government transparency out to fix a broken intelligence apparatus—an image the press has been happy to accommodate.

But Hoekstra has difficulty concealing the more vivid aspects of his imagination. In a recent letter to Bush about being kept out of the loop on secret counterterrorism intelligence programs, he insinuated that CIA Deputy Director Steve Kappes is part of "a strong and well-positioned group within the Agency [that] intentionally undermined the Administration and its policies." And when, at the Heritage event, I asked Hoekstra about his charge that certain members of the intelligence community seek to "help Al Qaeda," he stood by it. But, curiously, he couldn't finger any specific Al Qaeda sympathizers in the CIA. "If I were aware of anyone by name or by position that I believe at this point in time was there because their intent was to help those who might attack us, they wouldn't be there," he assured.

Then why make the claim?

"You have to hold that out as a possibility," Hoekstra explained. "I mean, every day—not every day, but on occasion, and more frequently than what we would like—we find out that the intelligence community has been penetrated, not necessarily by Al Qaeda, but by other nations or organizations that we are spying on. And so to rule out the possibility that there are people in the intelligence community that are doing this to help Al Qaeda, I think, would be naïve."

Paul Pillar, a former senior CIA Middle East analyst, is not comforted by Hoekstra's vigilance. Hoekstra and Santorum's claim is "just going off the deep end," he says. Pillar has already been on the receiving end of conservative smear jobs. In 2004, Robert Novak portrayed an off-the-record talk Pillar gave expressing concern about Bush's handling of Iraq as evidence of a CIA putsch to derail his reelection. By comparison, though, Pillar was treated with kid gloves. "Talk about a smear. Helping Al Qaeda?" he says. "Of course, this theme of intelligence officers allegedly being out to undermine the president—we've had that in spades. But I've never heard it take quite this shape."

IN ESSENCE, HOEKSTRA'S gambit reflects a deep-seated conservative belief: No matter what the facts say now, history will inevitably vindicate the pro-war position. If Negroponte agrees to declassify a torrent of captured documents, the thinking goes, there must be some pearl for the war supporters within Saddam's filing cabinets. Members of the Heritage panel of experts—Thomas Joscelyn of the Claremont Institute; Michael Tanji, a former Defense Intelligence Agency officer; and Heritage's own Peter Brookes—swear that they're not trying simply to revive Bush's case for invading Iraq, but rather to bring out the full truth. Yet even *that* might not be enough to get the right to stop suggesting that Bush was correct all along. One audience member, who identified himself as a military officer and former U.S. adviser to the Iraqi foreign ministry in 2003, recounted how he saw rooms full of "fine ashes," presumably the remnants of the information that, had the Baathists not destroyed it, would vindicate Bush's prewar claims. "Don't hold it personally if you don't find any real smoking gun here," he encouraged the panel, "because the Saddam regime went to very great pains to see that that didn't happen." Apparently, according to the chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, so did the U.S. intelligence community. ■

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America's proxy war.

Other Means

BY LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

"WHEN THE ELEPHANTS fight, the grass suffers." Or so went a variation of the Third World lament during the cold war. The lament clearly applies today in Lebanon. But it also applies in Washington, where the administration views the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah as a classic case of great-power brinkmanship—in this case, pitting the United States against Iran. The paradigm that the Bush team has drawn on in its response to the Lebanon crisis isn't the war on terrorism. It's the proxy battles of the cold war.

Proxy wars have rules, too—the first being that they should never reach the point of drawing their great-power backers into a wider one. To prevent this from happening during the proxy conflicts of the cold war—whether in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, or the Middle East—the Americans and the Soviets always established red lines beyond which their clients were not to venture. Hence, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger prevailed upon Israel to stop short of destroying Egypt's Third Army during the Yom Kippur War, thereby averting a direct conflict with the Soviet Union. Even in a war with much lower stakes, Washington repeatedly checked Israel's freedom to maneuver during its 1982 invasion of Lebanon. But, apparently, not this time. Pressed about the conflict, White House spokesman Tony Snow declared, "The president is not going to make military decisions for Israel."

Perhaps not exactly. But red lines have been drawn, whether the White House chooses to acknowledge them or not. With its own timetable for contesting Iran's nuclear ambitions—not to mention 130,000 U.S. troops fighting next door in Iraq—the administration has no appetite for a wider war. "If this escalates into open conflict between Iran and Israel," says Ray Takeyh, an Iran expert at the Council on Foreign Relations, "America's goals in Iraq and its nuclear diplomacy at the U.N. will both go up in flames." If administration officials haven't needed to sketch out a series of explicit red lines for the Jewish state, it's largely because Israel has done it for them: Israeli officials have offered assurances to their American counterparts that, absent direct provocation, they have no intention of striking either Iran or Syria.

Within Lebanon, meanwhile, the Bush team has drawn one red line—namely, the preservation of the Lebanese government. On the ground in Israel, Deputy National Security Adviser Elliot Abrams and Assistant Secretary of State David Welch have pressed Israel, with mixed results, to spare the country's infrastructure. For his part, President Bush has made a point of emphasizing "the fragile democracy in Lebanon," while Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice insists it is "extremely important that Israel exercise her restraint in its activities of self-defense." That insistence derives from something more than solidarity with the government in Beirut or even a humanitarian impulse. The administration has given Israel the green light to "hit Hezbollah hard," in the words of a senior Israeli official. But, with one eye to the aftermath, the Bush team fears civilian casualties will amplify the chorus of international criticism, forcing a premature halt to the campaign and poisoning a post-conflict settlement. "Israel knows it can't dismantle Hezbollah from the air, and it knows the [Lebanese] government can't rein [Hezbollah] in," says a Pentagon official. "Everything you're seeing is about leverage for the end game." That end game, both the United States and Israel hope, will include European—and particularly French—political support for an effort to neutralize Hezbollah.

Overall, however, the Bush team has spent many more hours encouraging Israel than constraining it. The administration, after all, has no more use for Hezbollah than Israel does. And, while the organization may not pose the existential threat to the United States that it does to Israel, the administration views it as a crucial proxy for Iran. Critics delight in faulting the Bush administration for viewing the international scene through a "state-centric" lens. But, when it comes to Hezbollah—which boasts verifiable return addresses in Tehran and Damascus—what other lens is there? The terrorist group, a State Department official says, counts as one of many clients that Iran has used to extend its "hegemony" through the Middle East. "There's a lot of people who believe that the Iranians are trying to exert more and more influence over the entire region, and the use of Hezbollah is to create more chaos to advance their strategy," President Bush told *Newsweek*'s Richard Wolffe last week, adding that this was "a theory that's got some legs to it as far as I'm concerned." In this telling, Hezbollah's provocation actually amounts to an opportunity to roll back Iranian influence. In fending off calls for a cease-fire, then, administration officials see themselves furthering not only Israel's interests, but also America's. Were the status quo left in place, explains one member of the Bush team, it would amount to a tremendous victory for Tehran. Conversely, any settlement that confirms a crushing defeat of Hezbollah would cut short Iran's reach and humiliate it for the entire region to see.

Even more so, because administration officials believe that Hezbollah's provocation relates, more than anything else, to the coming confrontation at the United Nations over Iran's nuclear program. Citing a catalogue of past examples in which Iran "turned on and turned off" Hezbollah activity at the Israeli border, a Pentagon official says, "This is [Iran's] way of saying, 'Make life hard for us, and we'll make it hard for you.'" Specifically, the White House sees the crisis as Iran's attempt to conflate its nuclear program

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with the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this, the Iranians already may have been dealt a setback, as most Arab governments have either remained silent or, as in the case of Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, condemned Hezbollah outright. (As one Lebanon-watcher notes, Hezbollah's actions have left a good chunk of the Saudi royal family stranded at Lebanese resorts.)

PROXY WARS ARE complicated undertakings, however. As tended to be the pattern during the cold war, while senior administration officials see the meddling hand of a larger power, the foreign policy bureaucracy over which they preside sees a local conflict—the product of indigenous forces, with nearby consequences. In particular, area specialists at the State Department and the Pentagon fear the consequences in Lebanon and Iraq.

Having encouraged and taken pride in Lebanon's Cedar Revolution—in which a combination of popular outrage and Western pressure forced Syrian troops from Lebanon last year—State Department officials, particularly those in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, lament the country's unraveling. Last year, Lebanese American University Professor Habib Malik told me, "The overwhelming majority in Lebanon realize that what's happening is the result of U.S. benevolence—Bush is even being called 'St. George.'" According to the White House's logic, U.S. support for the Israeli bombing campaign won't necessarily deplete this goodwill. But the government's Middle East specialists argue that the air campaign may be erasing last year's gains in one fell swoop. "In Lebanon, you may already be seeing diminishing returns," says David Schenker, until recently a Lebanon analyst at the Defense Department and now a senior fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "The longer this goes on, the greater the danger that Lebanese anger could move away from Hezbollah and toward Israel, and there is a risk that the United States could be held responsible."

Nor is this the greatest risk the United States faces. While the State Department bureaucracy fears for Lebanon's future, senior officers at the Pentagon fear the effect on America's own war a few hundred miles to the east. Taken aback at the scope of the air campaign, a Pentagon planner explains the concern of his colleagues this way: "Iran has three strategic assets: Hezbollah, missiles, and its people in Iraq. If Hezbollah's existence is genuinely threatened, there's no question Iran will ratchet up the pressure and the Badr Brigades and [Moqtada Al] Sadr will start to attack us [in Iraq]." Thus far, Sadr has contented himself with menacing rhetoric, warning: "[W]e in Iraq will not sit by with folded hands before the creep of Zionism." But senior American officers fear worse to come if the bombing campaign extends into next week. And none of this compares with the steep price they say could be exacted upon U.S. forces in the event of a direct confrontation between Israel and Iran or Syria.

Such a conflict seems unlikely. But what of Lebanon? Asked whether the country deserves its fate, an administration official shrugs: "Yeah, pity Lebanon." ■

Beirut Dispatch

Entombed

BY ANNIA CIEZADLO

FOUR STORIES BELOW the earth, in an abandoned parking garage, the families sprawled on blankets and on straw mats, with diapers and rumpled clothes ranged around them. Enormous generators circulated the stinking air. It reeked of staleness, human waste, and the recycled exhalations of thousands of refugees, most of whom had been there for days. To get in and out, or to move between levels, lines of people squeezed simultaneously up and down a staircase only wide enough for one.

Rowina Abdullah, a pretty 23-year-old with red-rimmed eyes, had left her house in the Shia neighborhood of Haret Hreik three days ago, just before it was bombed. She had been sitting underground ever since. "You are the third person who has come to see us," she said, holding on to her seven-year-old sister, Fatima. The first person to descend to the refugees was from Hezbollah; the second was from Amal, the other main Shia political party.

I asked her why she didn't go upstairs, why so many families stayed down here. Wasn't the air much better above ground? "Yes, but when we go upstairs, the bombings might come," she replied. I didn't tell her that, if the parking garage was bombed, they'd all be buried alive.

In the space of four days, the war in Lebanon had smashed the country's infrastructure, devastated its economy, and set back 16 years' worth of postwar reconstruction. Worse, the war is accelerating the failure of what President Bush has called Lebanon's "fragile democracy"—the bombed-out bridges and roads literally dividing the country into sectarian cantons. But, so far, the biggest losers in this war are the very people who are being blamed for starting it: the Shia. And the only group that seems willing to help them—their only protector and defender—is the one that actually started it, Hezbollah.

YOU CAN'T CALL yourself a journalist in this town until you've had a run-in with Hezbollah. I had mine in Haret Hreik on the night of July 13, about eight hours before a large swath of the neighborhood, including Abdullah's house, was bombed.

I had gone there, naïvely, to ask ordinary Shia what they thought of their brand-new war. The Israeli army's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, had just announced that he would target Haret Hreik that night, so it seemed like a good time to get some comment. The streets were

Annia Ciezadlo is a Beirut-based writer.

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empty except for *shebab*—young guys—whizzing past on mopeds with yellow Hezbollah flags fluttering off the backs. A few older men hurried home with hastily purchased groceries, battening down for a siege. They all said they supported Hezbollah wholeheartedly.

Minutes later, a battered Toyota pulled up, mounted with giant loudspeakers and full of Hezbollah members. After a brief argument, they relieved my translator and I of our cell phones, taking out the SIM cards first in case we were using them as tracking devices. Around the corner, they quizzed us hastily in the hallway of an apartment building, asking who we were and what we were doing. A man in his late thirties who spoke excellent English—clearly the boss—asked us to wait for a few minutes while a pudgy young man stood guard. Families filed out the elevator—mostly elderly couples fleeing the neighborhood, clutching overnight bags—and politely avoided staring at the foreign captives in their vestibule.

After a few minutes, the boss returned with three other men and gave us back our cell phones, apologizing to each of us in turn. I asked if he had anything to tell the American public. "Do not believe everything that your government says," he said, his voice almost pleading, devoid of the usual Hezbollah bluster. "The reality is that Israel is killing the people of Palestine and Lebanon. Small children are dead! The Lebanese resistance has the right to defend itself against any nation. This is our right, to be resistance, so that our captives in the jail of Israel get out, because our captives remain. And they don't think of them—only if Hezbollah makes some resistance."

But why now? The bravado returned: "We chose the right time," he said haughtily. "We don't care about politics." But then he smiled as he thought of a way to make us understand: "To be or not to be," he concluded, throwing his arms open wide. "That is the question."

Did he want to give a name? Or perhaps a *kunya*, the reverse patronymic that Arab leaders sometimes use as a nom de guerre, such as Abu Nidal, "Father of the Struggle"?

"No, no, no, no name!" he cried. "Just"—he raised a clenched fist—"resistance!"

"Resistance!" they all cried, laughing, touching each other on the shoulders. They looked terrified.

WHEN HE KIDNAPPED two of Israel's soldiers from its own territory, without the blessing or the knowledge of the Lebanese government, Hezbollah's leader, Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, effectively declared war on Israel. When he appeared that night on Hezbollah's Al Manar TV station—a news outlet that the United States classifies, like Hezbollah, as a terrorist group—the bearded, baby-faced Nasrallah was essentially saying, *l'etat, c'est moi.*

Until that moment, Hezbollah still had the option—in theory, at least—of disarming and participating more fully in Lebanon's government, becoming one of the country's most powerful sectarian political parties. It could have bargained its weapons to get better political representation for its constituents, the Shia, who have historically been the poorest and most disenfranchised Lebanese. But that would have meant giving up "the resistance," the ideology so central to Hezbollah that it functions as a national founding myth.

The resistance is many things. It is, first and foremost, an ongoing guerrilla war against Israel, which occupied southern Lebanon until its withdrawal in 2000. It is a metonym for the weapons—rockets, Iranian-made missiles, and drones—that give Hezbollah its power. It is the source of fierce pride for Hezbollah, the only Arab force to succeed in ousting Israel from its land. But, before anything else, the resistance was a political movement, born decades ago, of empowerment for Lebanon's eternally despised Shia.

In Hezbollah's collective mind, the Shia have finally emerged on top after being put down for so long, and now they want to prove that they can do what no other Arab country has done: defeat Israel. "You do not know today who you are fighting," declared Nasrallah on July 14. "You are fighting a people who possess a strength of faith that no one else has on the face of this Earth."

Nasrallah's war could not have happened without the failure of the Lebanese state, a constellation of religious groups, with its logic that the Shia's problems are for the Shia to solve. Born out of the neglect of this state, baptized in the 1983 truck bombings of the American Embassy and the U.S. Marine barracks, Hezbollah arose because no one else was willing, or able, to handle the Shia. Today, held captive by the myth of resistance—that they can defeat Israel with nothing but Arab steadfastness and willingness to die—the Shia are by turns defensive and defiant, angry, isolated, and more despised now than ever; these are exactly the conditions, in fact, that created Hezbollah in the first place.

IN SANAYEH GARDEN, Beirut's only public park, the fragile democracy Bush had nervously praised was nowhere to be found. Instead, there was a handful of students, a couple of flak-jacketed TV cameramen, and several hundred Shia who had fled the bombing in southern Lebanon. By July 18, at least 500,000 Lebanese had been displaced. One family had camped out under a tree, hanging a birdcage with a canary from its branches and setting up a small gas stove. A young man with greasy, shoulder-length curls walked up to me and asked, in French, if I was a journalist.

"Yes, I am," I told him. "Are you?"

"No," he replied. "I am king here."

The king led me to a tired young student wearing the insignia of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, a small, pro-Syrian nationalist group. Wissam Abou Sleiman, a 24-year-old college grad, was in charge of the relief operations for the entire park. There was nobody, not a single official, from the Lebanese government. None of Lebanon's powerful political parties had showed up; some had donated money, but no manpower. "Future helped a bit, but we want more

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from them," said Sleiman, his face tight with frustration.

The Future Movement is the Saudi-backed party of Saad Hariri, leading light of Beirut's Sunni establishment and son of billionaire former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The elder Hariri, who was assassinated by a car bomb last year, helped rebuild the city's downtown into an international tourist magnet. When Hezbollah launched its war against Israel, the collateral damage included Lebanon's thriving tourist economy, which was poised to have a banner year this summer. Sunnis, to whom the rebuilt Lebanon was a source of endless pride, are extremely angry. Now, to make matters worse, hordes of Shia are flooding middle-class Sunni neighborhoods in Beirut, some of which are still trying to get rid of Shia squatters from Lebanon's last war.

There's also the sectarian subtext of the current war, in which an Iranian-backed militia essentially assumed the prerogative of the state. Two days after Hezbollah kidnapped the soldiers, the Saudi Press Agency issued a statement declaring the war a "miscalculated adventure" carried out by "elements inside the state and those behind them"—a clear reference to Iran. Over the past year, Sunni support for "the resistance" has dropped considerably, thanks to Shia support for Syria. Tensions between Sunnis and Shia, already simmering, are now explosive.

For all these reasons, the Sunnis, along with the rest of Lebanon's sectarian leaders, are not inclined to help the almost exclusively Shia refugees. "Deep down inside, in the psyche of Sunni politicians, and certainly the Christians, they think: 'They started this, let them fix it. They caused this mass exodus. Why should we clean their shit?' " says Charles Adwan, the former director of the Lebanese Transparency Association. "Those people are Shia, and they are there because of Shia actions. Let the Shia help them."

UNDERGROUND, IN THE fluorescent half-light of the parking garage, tensions were rising. Men started shouting and pushing one another. Clearly, the presence of a foreigner was not helping, so I left. As I walked out of the reeking garage, Hezbollah *shebab* wheeled five shopping carts full of groceries down the long, winding ramp, and announced over loudspeakers, "*Allah karim*"—God is generous.

Above ground, a Hezbollah functionary listening to an earpiece plugged into his cell phone asked me to move away from the entrance. Israeli drones and satellites were floating invisibly overhead, he said, and if they saw people gathering outside the parking garage, they might pinpoint this location and bomb it. I told him I was just leaving. "OK, but hurry up, because the Sayyid's about to speak," he said. "Just in case, God forbid, they attack during his speech."

Suddenly, I realized why the refugees were huddled four stories down, breathing the rotten air instead of emerging from underground: The Hezbollah officials weren't letting them upstairs. They were keeping them down there, bringing them just enough food and information to survive, keeping them safe from the enemy. ■

The ethics of battle.

War Fair

BY MICHAEL WALZER

ISRAEL IS NOW at war with an enemy whose hostility is extreme, explicit, unrestrained, and driven by an ideology of religious hatred. But this is an enemy that does not field an army; that has no institutional structure and no visible chain of command; that does not recognize the legal and moral principle of noncombatant immunity; and that does not, indeed, acknowledge any rules of engagement. How do you—how does anyone—fight an enemy like that? I cannot deal with the strategy and tactics of such a fight. How to strike effectively, how to avoid a dangerous escalation—those are important topics, but not mine. The question I want to address is about morality and politics.

The easy part of the answer is to say what cannot rightly be done. There cannot be any direct attacks on civilian targets (even if the enemy doesn't believe in the existence of civilians), and this principle is a major constraint also on attacks on the economic infrastructure. Writing about the first Iraq war, in 1991, I argued that the U.S. decision to attack "communication and transportation systems, electric power grids, government buildings of every sort, water pumping stations and purification plants" was wrong. "Selected infrastructural targets are easy enough to justify: bridges over which supplies are carried to the army in the field provide an obvious example. But power and water ... are very much like food: they are necessary to the survival and everyday activity of soldiers, but they are equally necessary to everyone else. An attack here is an attack on civilian society. ... [I]t is the military effects, if any, that are 'collateral.' " That was and is a general argument; it clearly applies to the Israeli attacks on power stations in Gaza and Lebanon.

The argument, in this case, is prudential as well as moral. Reducing the quality of life in Gaza, where it is already low, is intended to put pressure on whoever is politically responsible for the inhabitants of Gaza—and then these responsible people, it is hoped, will take action against the shadowy forces attacking Israel. The same logic has been applied in Lebanon, where the forces are not so shadowy. But no one is responsible in either of these cases, or, better, those people who might take responsibility long ago chose not to. The leaders of the sovereign state of Lebanon insist that they have no control over the southern part of their country—and, more amazingly, no obligation to take control. Still, Palestinian civilians are not likely to hold anyone responsible for their fate except the Israelis, and, while the Lebanese will be more discriminating, Israel will still bear the larger burden of blame. Hamas and Hezbollah feed on the suffering their own activity brings about, and an Israeli response

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that increases the suffering only intensifies the feeding.

SO, WHAT CAN Israel do? It is an important principle of just war theory that justice, though it rules out many ways of fighting, cannot rule out fighting itself—since fighting is sometimes morally and politically necessary. A military response to the capture of the three Israeli soldiers wasn't, literally, necessary; in the past, Israel has negotiated instead of fighting and then exchanged prisoners. But, since Hamas and Hezbollah describe the captures as legitimate military operations—acts of war—they can hardly claim that further acts of war, in response, are illegitimate. The further acts have to be proportional, but Israel's goal is to prevent future raids, as well as to rescue the soldiers, so proportionality must be measured not only against what Hamas and Hezbollah have already done, but also against what they are (and what they say they are) trying to do.

The most important Israeli goal in both the north and the south is to prevent rocket attacks on its civilian population, and, here, its response clearly meets the requirements of necessity. The first purpose of any state is to defend the lives of its citizens; no state can tolerate random rocket attacks on its cities and towns. Some 700 rockets have been fired from northern Gaza since the Israeli withdrawal a year ago—imagine the U.S. response if a similar number were fired at Buffalo and Detroit from some Canadian no-man's-land. It doesn't matter that, so far, the Gazan rockets have done minimal damage; the intention every time one is fired is to hit a home or a school, and, sooner or later, that intention will be realized. Israel has waited a long time for the Palestinian Authority and the Lebanese government to deal with the rocket fire from Gaza and the rocket build-up on the Lebanese border. In the latter case, it has also waited for the United Nations, which has a force in southern Lebanon that is mandated to "restore international peace and security" but has nonetheless watched the positioning of thousands of rockets and has done nothing. A couple of years ago, the Security Council passed a resolution calling for the disarming of Hezbollah; its troops, presumably, have noticed that this didn't happen. Now Israel has rightly decided that it has no choice except to take out the rockets itself. But, again, how can it do that?

The crucial argument is about the Palestinian use of civilians as shields. Academic philosophers have written at great length about "innocent shields," since these radically exploited (but sometimes, perhaps, compliant) men and women pose a dilemma that tests the philosophers' dialectical skills. Israeli soldiers are not required to have dialectical skills, but, on the one hand, they are expected to do everything they can to prevent civilian deaths, and, on the other hand, they are expected to fight against an enemy that hides behind civilians. So (to quote a famous line from Trotsky), they may not be interested in the dialectic, but the dialectic is interested in them.

There is no neat solution to their dilemma. When Palestinian militants launch rocket attacks from civilian areas, they are themselves responsible—and no one else is—for the civilian deaths caused by Israeli counterfire. But (the dialectical argument continues) Israeli soldiers are required to aim as precisely as they can at the militants, to take risks in order to do that, and to call off counterattacks that would kill large numbers of civilians. That last requirement means that, sometimes, the Palestinian use of civilian shields, though it is a cruel and immoral way of fighting, is also an effective way of fighting. It works, because it is both morally right and politically intelligent for the Israelis to minimize—and to be seen trying to minimize—civilian casualties. Still, minimizing does not mean avoiding entirely: Civilians will suffer so long as no one on the Palestinian side (or the Lebanese side) takes action to stop rocket attacks. From that side, though not from the Israeli side, what needs to be done could probably be done without harm to civilians.

I WAS RECENTLY asked to sign a condemnation of the Israeli operation in Gaza—a statement claiming that the rocket attacks and the military raid that led to the capture of Gilad Shalit are simply the inevitable consequences of the Israeli occupation: There "never will be peace or security until the occupation ends." In the past, I am sure, some Palestinian attacks were motivated by the experience of occupation. But that isn't true today. Hamas is attacking *after* the Israelis departed Gaza and *after* the formation of a government that is (or was until the attacks) committed to a large withdrawal from the West Bank. Similarly, Hezbollah's attacks came *after* the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The aim of these militants is not to create a Palestinian state alongside Israel; it is to destroy Israel. Admittedly, that is a long-term aim that derives from a religious view of history. Secularists and pragmatists have a lot of trouble acknowledging such a view, let alone understanding it.

By contrast, the Israeli response has only a short-term aim: to stop the attacks across its borders. Until that is achieved, no Israeli government is going to move forward with another withdrawal. In fact, it is probably true that the Hamas and Hezbollah attacks have made any future unilateral withdrawals impossible. Israel needs a partner on the other side who is, first of all, capable of maintaining security on the new border and who is, second, actually willing to do that. I can't pretend that the Israeli military operations now in progress are going to produce a partner like that. At best, the army and air force will weaken the capacity of Hamas and Hezbollah to attack Israel; they won't alter their resolve. It will probably take the international community—the United States, Europe, the United Nations, some Arab states—to bring the Lebanese army into the south of the country and make it an effective force once it is there. And it will take a similar coalition to sponsor and support a Palestinian government that is committed to two states with one permanent and peaceful border and that is prepared to repress the religious militants who oppose that commitment. Until there is an effective Lebanese army and a Palestinian government that believes in co-existence, Israel is entitled to act, within the dialectical limits, on its own behalf. ■

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In crisis comes opportunity.

Roll Back

BY DENNIS ROSS

Conspiracy is like oxygen in the Middle East. Everyone breathes it. And it's a mode of thought suited to understanding Hezbollah's attacks on Israel. The attacks, after all, represented a sudden shift in the group's thinking. In the six years following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, the Shia militants didn't cross the blue line—the recognized international border separating Israel from Lebanon. When they launched attacks, they did so in disputed areas like the Sheba farms. Hezbollah seemed to realize that it could only go so far before provoking international opprobrium. Then, last week, Hezbollah changed its posture. It did so in a way certain to bring pain and suffering to Lebanon. This fact is itself interesting. Hezbollah, until now, has branded itself as a protector of the Lebanese people, not the representatives of a foreign agenda.

That self-image is no longer tenable. Many Arab (and non-Arab) observers see an Iranian hand guiding Hezbollah. Isn't it interesting, they ask, that Hezbollah's attacks coincided with the deadline the European Union set for Iranians to respond to its proposed nuclear deal? What better way to show that Iran can make life difficult for those who pressure it than to create a broad crisis in the region?

If you buy this reading of events, you must accept a certain irony. It is fashionable in some quarters to say that U.S. identification with Israel produces hostility against us in the Islamic world. But, in actuality, Israel may be paying a price for the U.S.-led effort to pressure Iran to give up its nuclear aspirations.

Those who view the Israeli offensive in Lebanon as counterproductive to U.S. foreign policy miss an emerging reality: Iran is waging a struggle to achieve regional dominance that threatens the United States and all its friends in the Middle East. The good news is that Hezbollah has unmasked Iran's intentions, which even Arab leaders now appear to recognize. As such, with the right U.S. steps, the current crisis may be turned into an opportunity.

How has Hezbollah exposed Iranian intentions? If Israel were still in Lebanon, perhaps Hezbollah could claim it was resisting Israeli occupation. But Israel ended that occupation, and the Iranians stepped up the supply of katyushas and surface-to-surface rockets—approximately 13,000, according to the Israelis. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Iran saw value in provoking an indirect conflict with Israel at a time of its choosing. In this, Iran is strangely mimicking its old nemesis, Saddam Hussein, who responded to the onset of the Gulf war—a war designed to expel Iraq from Kuwait—by launching missiles against Israel. Much like Saddam before them, the Iranians believe they can mobilize the Arab world against the United States by playing on the sense of grievance that is so deeply embedded among many against Israel.

The last thing that Iran wants is for that grievance to disappear. No wonder that, during my time as the American negotiator, we were constantly aware of Iranian pressure on Hamas and Islamic Jihad to initiate acts of terrorism in Israel. And that was when we had a peace process. We have not had one since 2001, but, at moments of promise—if only for quiet—it is Iran that pushes the hardest to make sure the quiet does not last. Only last week, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak asserted that he had arranged a deal for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, but "other parties" undercut the deal. Shalit's release would have helped end the siege of Gaza—and much Palestinian suffering—but that wouldn't serve Iran's interests.

I don't mean to excuse Syria. In the past, they suggested that only low-level Hamas functionaries reside in their country. But, last week, Khaled Meshal, the real leader of Hamas, held a press conference in a Damascus hotel, announcing that he was the man to talk to about Shalit's release. No reason to keep Hamas hidden; no reason to be fearful; no reason to think that Syria would pay a price for Hamas's actions.

In the end, this conflict is not about Israel. True, Israel may be a foil, but Iran has bigger fish to fry. Hezbollah and Hamas are tools in the Iranian game of self-promotion, furthering an Islamist agenda, and undoing Western influence in the area. The Syrians, for their part, seem to believe that Iran is on a roll, and better to be playing along with it than with others, and they clearly see little price for doing so.

Today, Israel and the United States are on the same side facing the same threat. But they are not the only ones under threat. Every non-Islamist regime in the area is ultimately a target. Iran seeks to exploit anger in the area against the United States and Israel for the occupations of Iraqis and Palestinians. To be sure, they don't create the sense of grievance, but they are determined to fuel it. Only this time, with Hezbollah, they may have miscalculated. Hezbollah does not command an instinctive following throughout a largely Sunni Arab world.

When Hezbollah was fighting Israeli "occupation," it was untouchable. But the general Arab narrative has been that the violence, meaning terrorism, is driven by occupation: no occupation, no violence. Hamas has already cast doubt on this narrative by launching attacks from Gaza after the Israeli withdrawal, but it is hard for Arab regimes to challenge Hamas's legitimacy. Hezbollah, however, is another story. Saudi Arabia has taken the lead in denying that

Former Ambassador Dennis Ross is counselor and Ziegler distinguished fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and author of The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace.

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Hezbollah's act represented "resistance"—hollowed in Arab psychology—and declared it "reckless." Then, over the weekend, at the Arab League, Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal—hardly a paragon of unscripted language—called Hezbollah's actions "unexpected, inappropriate, and irresponsible." He told his counterparts, "These acts will pull the whole region back to years ago, and we cannot simply accept them." The foreign minister's remarks were then endorsed by Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and the Palestinian Authority. (The Palestinian Authority represented Mahmoud Abbas, not the Hamas-led cabinet.) In Lebanon, you could hear similar noises. Walid Jumblatt and other parliamentarians asked what gave a party (Hezbollah) the right to commit the country to war, with all its attendant costs.

As Israel carries on its campaign to damage Hezbollah and hold the Lebanese government accountable, it needs to be mindful of this potentially strategic development among the Arabs. Neither the Arab world nor the international community will give Israel a blank check for military action. Israel needs to walk a fine line: to inflict a devastating blow against Hezbollah's infrastructure without so substantially damaging Lebanese infrastructure and killing Lebanese civilians that it diverts attention from Hezbollah and onto itself. This is easier to say than to do, especially when Hezbollah rockets are hidden in the basements of apartment buildings and continue to kill Israeli civilians. But, ultimately, as I discovered in helping to broker the 1993 and 1996 understandings that ended Israeli-Hezbollah battles, Israel cannot stop the katyushas.

This time, however, Israel may have some silent partners, at least in Lebanon. It is not only Israel that may demand the Lebanese army assume positions along the border, something that the Lebanese government was required to do, according to U.N. Security Council Resolution 425. The Arab world may join in making this possible, determined to prevent Hezbollah from being able to repeat this scenario in six months' time.

ISRAEL WILL DEMAND this as an outcome, since it will not accept the preexisting status quo vis-à-vis Hezbollah or Hamas. Israel is now trying to reestablish its deterrent. Withdrawals from Lebanon and Gaza were interpreted as signs of Israeli weakness, and a new Israeli government is now acting to prove that, if you attack Israel, you pay a terrible price.

The United States has an interest in seeing that deterrent reestablished. It is necessary if there is to be relative calm between Arabs and Israelis. It is necessary if, at some point, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is to pursue his desire to fix Israel's borders. (The lesson about the withdrawals is now clear: They can't be strictly unilateral. Obligations must flow in two directions. Israel can declare its readiness to leave most of the West Bank, but, if Palestinians want Israeli withdrawal, they must prove they will assume security responsibilities.) Reestablishing the Israeli deterrent is also necessary as part of the struggle with Iran and its proxies. They have provoked these twin conflicts, and they must not be seen as gaining from them. This is part of a larger struggle, and Islamists must begin to lose their swagger; they must be discredited and their more secular opponents must begin to gain. We want models of success on the non-Islamist side, and it may be that Hezbollah's action, so clearly serving a non-Lebanese agenda, is a wake-up call for a large part of the Arab world.

Perhaps, it will also be a wake-up call for the Bush administration. Outside of Iraq, we sit on the sidelines. We inspire no fear in Syria or Iran today; Syria need not be a proxy for the Iranians. But our warnings mean nothing to them because there is never a consequence. It seems remarkable to say it, but several years into the war in Iraq, most in the area expect very little of us, or worse, dismiss our statements.

We need to become a factor again. It is time for us to take a leading role in ending this crisis, recognizing who must not gain and understanding that, with much of the Arab world lined up on the right side, we have something important to work with. Statecraft is about identifying when a crisis can be turned into an opportunity. Remaining on the sidelines is likely to turn one more opportunity into a lost cause. ■

The wider war.

Casus Belli

BY MOSHE YAALON

FOR YEARS, WE were told that the "root cause" of the Middle East's problems was the Israeli occupation of Arab lands—the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and southern Lebanon. Peace would come to the Middle East, according to this view, only when Israel finally retreated to its 1967 borders.

The "root cause" theory always had plenty of holes. But never has it looked quite so naïve and simplistic as it does this week. The present crisis was initiated—in Gaza by Hamas and in southern Lebanon by Hezbollah—from lands that are *not* under Israeli occupation. Perhaps, then, it is time to consider whether the conflict is the result of different "root causes": namely, Iran, Syria, and the radical Islamists they sponsor. After all, Iran has offered financial support to the Hamas-led government in Palestine; Syria has sheltered Hamas leaders, allowing them to order terror-

Lieutenant General Moshe Yaalon, a distinguished military fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, was chief of staff of the Israel Defense Forces from 2002 to 2005.

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ist attacks against Israelis from the safety of Damascus; and both countries have, for years, used Hezbollah as a terrorist arm of their respective foreign policies. Theirs is a unique partnership in which Iran plays the mastermind, Syria plays the facilitator, and two violent groups do the actual killing. Only when these states and their terrorist proxies are defeated will the Middle East finally know peace.

THE BEGINNING POINT for this conflict was not the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Nor was it the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza after a defensive war. Rather, it came 27 years ago, when Iranian revolutionaries began to inspire, and later assist, radicals throughout the world, including the leaders of Hezbollah and Hamas.

That assistance has peaked in recent years. Hezbollah is equipped with a variety of Iranian rockets, and, according to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the missile that hit an Israeli warship last week was launched from Lebanon by members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Farther south, Palestinian terrorists have received Iranian money and weapons, which have been smuggled—under the not-so-watchful eyes of Egyptian authorities—into the Gaza Strip.

What, exactly, is Iran hoping to accomplish by sponsoring this violence? The radical Shia regime of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wants three things: to establish hegemony over a Muslim world long wracked by internecine religious and ethnic conflicts; to severely curtail American power; and, ultimately, to provoke the return of the Hidden Imam, the central figure of Shia eschatology, and thereby usher in a Muslim messianic age. To achieve these goals, Iran is willing to support just about any terrorist organization that will confront the West; but goading Hezbollah and Hamas to attack Israel suits Iran's strategic mission especially well. For one thing, targeting Israel signals Iranian strength to the Muslim populations worldwide that the mullahs hope to lead. For another, Iran sees the destruction of Israel as a means of neutering—or even as a prelude to destroying—the United States. Ahmadinejad himself has gone so far as to refer to "a world without America." When the Iranian president denies the Holocaust or when he calls for Israel to be wiped from the map, we tend to see him as a ridiculous figure. In fact, Ahmadinejad appears quite serious about using Iranian foreign policy to serve the purposes of Shia eschatology. This explains his desire to bring the conflict between Islam and the West into a new, belligerent phase—which, in turn, explains why rockets are falling this week on Israeli cities.

Ahmadinejad and his allies have good reasons to think their plan is working. Islamists take credit for pushing the United States out of Lebanon in 1984, the Soviets out of Afghanistan in 1989, the Israelis out of Lebanon in 2000, the Spanish out of Iraq in 2004, and the Israelis out of Gaza in 2005. Now they believe they are close to pushing the Americans out of Iraq as well. That Iran has often paid no price for its transgressions—the 1983 bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon; the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center in Argentina; the torture and imprisonment of thousands of dissidents; the continuous violation of international understandings related to its nuclear program—has only emboldened Islamists worldwide, fueling a perception among radicals that the West is simply afraid of confronting them.

Syria, for its part, may not be an Islamist state, but its leader, Bashar Assad, clings to power through the manipulation of anti-Western sentiment. An alliance with Iran is, therefore, in his interest. Like Iran's mullahs, he has paid no penalty for his numerous sins—the assassination of Rafik Hariri in Lebanon; the ruthless suppression of dissidents in his own country; the use of Syrian soil as a safe haven for terrorist operations against coalition forces in Iraq; the shelter granted to leaders of terrorist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad; and so on. The regime feels so confident in its immunity from American or Israeli attack that it allowed Hamas leader Khaled Meshal to hold a press conference in Damascus celebrating the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier—even as Hamas leaders in Palestine were rushing to distance themselves from the abduction.

ALL OF THIS does not necessarily mean that Israel will have to fight a war with Syria and Iran. But it does mean that the West will have to take strong measures to block both countries from continuing to project their power—and to demonstrate to Islamists worldwide that sponsorship of terrorism invites severe penalties. The Israeli operations in Lebanon and Gaza are a first step to achieving this end, but they are not, by themselves, enough to finish the job.

First, the West should insist on the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolution 1559, which require the dismantling of all armed militias in Lebanon. Next, the West should impose the strongest possible regime of economic and political sanctions on Iran and Syria. Tehran and Damascus must be made to understand that sponsoring terrorism does not pay.

These steps—combined with ongoing Israeli strikes against Hamas—will diminish the power of radical elements in Gaza and the West Bank. Iranian influence in the Palestinian territories has been on the rise lately, but, with Iranian proxies evicted from Lebanon, it will become more difficult for the mullahs to aid Palestinian terrorists. In addition, Hamas will see that the international community is resolute in its determination to punish terrorist activity. Perhaps pragmatic Palestinian leaders will therefore think twice about drawing even closer to Syria and Iran.

This crisis offers the West an opportunity to revise its thinking on the Middle East. The question of where Israel ends up setting its permanent borders can no longer be seen as the underlying cause of regional mayhem. That distinction belongs to Syria, Iran, and their radical Islamist proxies. Hemming their power is the best chance Israel and the West have of preventing further bloodshed—and of cutting off terrorism at its real roots. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

High Fashions

THE TITLE FIXES THE PLACE and the tone: a film that is called **THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA** must live in the world of fashion and its diabolics. The specific place is a slick magazine called *Runway*, and the air around it is filled with the slash of verbal rapiers and stilettos, lunging and parrying. The screenplay by Aline Brosh McKenna, derived from Lauren Weisberger's novel, begins with reminders of a previous picture about a fashion mag, Stanley Donen's *Funny Face* (1957). Once again the sovereign is an imperious woman, whose staff are tremulous slaves competing in hard-breathing smartness. Once again the courtiers are upset by a newcomer, a young woman who appears in un-chic clothes. Once again there is, later on, a trip to Paris.

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
(20th Century Fox)

HEADING SOUTH
(Shadow)

But in this new picture the focus on fashion is only one of the templates. *Devil* is not only about style in women's clothes; it is also concerned with cinematic style and with moral style. Cinematically, as in numerous films about high-pressure offices of many kinds, newspaper or brokerage or advertising, the pulse of the picture keeps pounding. The only way these people protect themselves from being stabbed in the back is to keep as far ahead as possible. As the picture's tempo begins to engulf us, we feel that we have been on this roller coaster before. David Frankel, the director, deftly aided by the editor, Mark Livolsi, seems to count on our familiarity with this hectic genre.

Basically, however, the film is built on a third pattern—what is by now a familiar exercise in American morality. First comes a waltz—a long one—with the Bitch Goddess, after which the protagonist sobers up and goes straight. In *Devil* an idealistic young woman comes to New York and gets a job: exciting and prestigious, but not what she had been aiming for. After a certain amount of success and disgust, she shucks the golden shackles. (Some male predecessors are in *Five Star Final*, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, *The Hucksters*.) The heroine of *Devil* wants to be a serious journalist, gets caught in the glitzy maelstrom, but finally cuts loose.

This heroine is played by Anne Hathaway, one more big-ballyhoo nondiscovery, the flattest "major" arrival since Audrey Tautou. Hathaway has big eyes and small talent. She is so juiceless that she undermines the scene in which she is hired by the supposedly astute editor.

That editor, called Miranda Priestly, is Meryl Streep, who is white-haired here and, uncomfortable though it is to say so, is disappointing. Never in the course of the film does Miranda raise her voice, whether commanding or dismissing or even grudgingly admitting satisfaction. Apparently Miranda decided early in her career to play against type, to keep the *voce* very *sotto*, as a surprise to those who expect a blast and to unnerve victims. But Streep doesn't give us the woman who made that decision, the woman who restrains her impatience and anger with the dolts who inhabit her world. We get no sense from her of that vocal pitch as this woman's calculated method. She is simply soft-voiced. (And the director's one dull touch is Miranda's first appearance. In a low-level shot, we see her legs swing out of her car. May it be the last time we see that shot.)

The best performance comes from Stanley Tucci as the *Runway* art director. Tucci presents a homosexual man without a trace of cartoon—shrewd, skilled, and weathered without being worn. It is a well-judged and accomplished piece of work. Hathaway's boyfriend, who provides a plot counterpoint, is adequately rendered by Adrian Grenier, and a detour in their relationship is supplied by the attractive Simon Baker.

With his second major film, *Time Out*, the French director Laurent Cantet established himself as a serious artist. (I missed *Human Resources*, his first film released in the United States.) Now, with his third, **HEADING SOUTH**, Cantet both buttresses his reputation and worries it a bit.

The setting is Haiti—Port-au-Prince—in the 1970s, the time of Baby Doc. Most of the film takes place at a resort hotel on the beach, and most of it concerns two well-to-do white women from America, who speak French and spend summers there. (There is a third woman, genuinely French, but she is auxiliary.) They partake in what is apparently a recognized summer sport—liaisons with young Haitian men who furnish attention and sex in return for generous gifts.

The more experienced of these women is Ellen, played by Charlotte Rampling, who is back for her sixth summer. (She calls the island "Hah-eetee.") Her black companion is young Legba, who had previously attended a woman named Brenda. After an absence of three years, Brenda (Karen Young) returns and seeks him out again. No serious rivalry erupts between Ellen and Brenda for Legba—affections are not sufficiently fixed—but there are irritations and discontents. This portion of the film proceeds as a case study in exploitation, wealthy women utilizing native poverty for their satisfaction when and as long as it suits them—a glandular instance of global capitalism.

But the very first sequence suggests another theme. The majordomo of the hotel, Albert, is waiting at the airport for Brenda when a native woman approaches him and asks him to take her fifteen-year-old daughter—just to take her, to protect her from people who will probably soon kidnap the daughter after they murder the mother. Albert politely declines; and we move with Brenda into the beach story.

For a time—too long a time, in fact—that grave opening seems simply an odd

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way to approach the sexual exploits of the white women. Then the social-political theme that was predicted in that opening begins to seep into the story. But it is murkily handled. What Cantet obviously intended is never quite realized. He clearly wanted to juxtapose the hedonism of the visiting women and the wretched state of native life, including the pampered Legba. The social irony is never justly realized. The effect is almost of a jigsaw puzzle that we are left to assemble.

Cantet is masterly with the hotel smoothness that excludes the reality just outside. He draws first-class acting from Rampling, for whom unconventional morality seems a habitat, and from Young as Brenda, who is liberating herself from the repressions of her past. If only Cantet and Robin Campillo (who based their screenplay on stories by Dany Lafèrriere) had balanced the sexual and political elements more acutely, the result could have been searing. ■

Sarah Williams Goldhagen on Architecture

Extra-Large

A FRIEND RECENTLY TOLD me that his most important pedagogical tool as an architect is this maxim: the architect's primary ethical responsibility is to be the guardian of the public realm, in contrast to the myriad others who currently configure our built landscape—clients, politicians, contractors, developers, and NIMBY-driven "community action" committees. The public realm includes not only cultural institutions, but also arteries of movement; not only urban plazas and public parks, but also abandoned blocks, suburban playgrounds, and brownfields; not only shopping malls, but also parking lots. And it includes not only the voids between buildings, but also the buildings themselves, exterior and sometimes interior.

Training architects to be urban designers is common in modern architecture, and it has engendered some wonderful places, such as Bruno Taut's functional and beloved modernist housing estates of the late 1920s in Berlin. More notoriously, it has produced also some disastrous ones, such as the ever-collapsing Pruitt-Igoe project of the 1950s, in St. Louis. As a consequence of the disasters, the specter of architects designing urban (or suburban, or whatever) environments conjures up popular fears that singular, and singularly wrong-headed, visions will be visited upon precious and complicated social space. This certainly happens. Yet the alternative approach—confining the obligations of architects to a particular site's perimeter—is inordinately worse.

Architects often switch-hit between architecture and urban design. You might think, given their celebrity, that Daniel Libeskind and Frank Gehry are at the forefront of new thinking about the shape of today's and tomorrow's built public realm, but you'd be wrong. Rem Koolhaas is. Heart-stoppingly brilliant, Koolhaas owes his influence to his omnivorous curiosity about, and wide-angle lens on, the contemporary world; his extraordinary mix of nihilism, idealism, and wit; his institutional base at the Harvard Design School; his students' and apprentices' work; his facility for generating opaque and paradoxical aphorisms, many of which are mass-reproduced in his highly stylized publications; and, most importantly, his often prophetic ideas and buildings. From Koolhaas come some of contemporary architecture's most-reproduced forms and structures: the giraffe-legged Villa dall'Ava in suburban Paris, one of the greatest buildings of the late twentieth century, and the stupendous fishnet-steel-and-glass-covered Seattle Public Library, which opened in 2004. He has re-directed the architectural thought and practices of a generation.

TO GIVE A SENSE OF THE CURrent multicontinental and multidisciplinary scope of Koolhaas's reach, here is a list of his current or recently completed projects: Prada's so-called Epicenters in New York, San Francisco, Beverly Hills, and Shanghai; a 228,055-square-foot "Congress Center" in Cordoba, Spain; an 830,000-square-foot retail, dining, and entertainment complex for the historic Mercati Generali section of downtown Rome; a six-million-plus-square-foot skyscraper housing offices, a hotel, and a cinema and theater complex in Beijing. He has also prepared or is preparing master plans for Oslo; the so-called White City section of London; Oude Dokken in Ghent, Belgium; and Zeche Zollverein, the UNESCO World Heritage industrial site in Essen, Germany.

Koolhaas's Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) runs largely on the fuel of energetic young architects, many of whom eventually leave the firm to start their own practices, the most recent example being the decamping of Joshua Prince-Ramus, with OMA's entire New York branch in tow, to create the independent firm REX. Koolhaas's dominion stretches into the work of any number of these younger firms, as well as into the practices whose principals have been smitten from afar. Beyond REX, this includes the Dutch MVRDV, the London-based Zaha Hadid Architects and Foreign Office Architects, the Tokyo-based SANAA, the Chicago-based Studio Gang, and the New York–based Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis. These and other firms constitute a cohort of rising or risen stars, a School of Koolhaas. They differ from each other in many respects, and some of them are more deft in their urbanism than the master; but OMA's theoretical positions and formal tropes reverberate in them all.

Yet influence—and Koolhaas's influence extends deep into the academy as well—does not a guardian of the public realm make. So what are the consequences of Koolhaas's reach? For years, he has played a double game: provocateur and organization man. He insists that his stance toward the contemporary world is pointedly, even brutally, critical, and that he has "always been interested in shocking people," even as he is the

Sarah Williams Goldhagen taught architectural history and theory at the Harvard Design School for ten years and is the author of LOUIS KAHN'S SITUATED MODERNISM *(Yale University Press). With this issue she becomes* THE NEW REPUBLIC*'s architecture critic.*

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servant and icon-shaper of the empires of Prada, Thomas Krens's Guggenheims, and governments around the world. "To be an architect who builds in today's economy," he concedes, "means to a frighteningly large extent" accepting the status quo.

Despite his pixilated papering over of incompatibilities, Koolhaas and his work have always been rife with contradictions. Obviously aware of this, he insists that his architecture and his urban design re-conceptualize the public realm the better to fortify it. Assessing the validity of his claims requires digging beneath his posturings and contradictions, and looking backward toward his intellectual formation. Doing so not only illuminates his contributions to the progress—and the retardation—of contemporary architecture and urban design, but also highlights some of the most critical questions facing architecture and urban design today.

Born in 1944, Koolhaas left Holland as a child with his left-leaning parents—his father was a journalist—to live in Indonesia, which had only recently cast off the mantle of Dutch colonial occupation. From age eight to twelve, he grew to the rhythms of Jakarta, a politically volatile, cacophonous, overcrowded, and vibrant conurbation of rich and (mainly) poor. His family returned to Holland in 1956. Imagine the predispositionally disaffected young Koolhaas, shocked by Dutch life in the typical Dutch city. Historically wealthy, small in scale, and lovingly maintained, the Netherlands seemed to him a living museum, all artificiality and cultivated tulips. He hated Holland. To this day the only Dutch city he finds tolerable is Rotterdam, where OMA is based—Rotterdam, which was flattened during World War II and reconstructed in the 1950s along then-contemporary principles of urban design. Indonesia's stark contrast to Holland engendered in Koolhaas an antipathy for homogeneous, tightly regulated urban configurations, especially those infatuated with their own history.

This antipathy grew when Koolhaas reached his twenties. Working as a filmmaker and a journalist, he encountered the work of Constant Nieuwenhuys, a Dutch artist-architect and erstwhile member of the Surrealist-inspired group CoBrA, whose best-known member is Asger Jorn; Constant (as he is commonly known) was briefly associated also with the Marxist French Situationists. When Koolhaas and Constant met, the elder had already been working for years on his "New Babylon" series of paintings, sketches, texts, and architectural models describing the shape of a post-revolutionary society. Constant's New Babylon was to be a series of linked transformable structures, some of which themselves were the size of a small city—what architects call a megastructure. Perched above ground, Constant's megastructures would literally leave the bourgeois metropolis below and would be populated by *homo ludens*—man at play. (*Homo Ludens* is the title of a book by the great Dutch historian Johan Huizinga.) In the New Babylon, the bourgeois shackles of work, family life, and civic responsibility would be discarded. The post-revolutionary individual would wander from one leisure environment to another in search of new sensations. Beholden to no one, he would sleep, eat, recreate, and procreate where and when he wanted. Self-fulfillment and self-satisfaction were Constant's social goals. Deductive reasoning, goal-oriented production, the construction and betterment of a political community—all these were eschewed.

Koolhaas was drawn, though ambivalently, to this hedonistic vision. He found its utopianism and anti-capitalism distasteful, but he was captivated by the idea of an ever-transforming megastructural city where the modern subject could continually remake his psyche by ambling into some serious fun. And visually, the New Babylon was compellingly playful, with horizontal floor planes vertically pushed and pulled, and spaces defined by ephemeral constructions rather than solid walls, and entropic districts jostling within and against the existing city.

In the late 1960s, Koolhaas enrolled at the Architectural Association in London, at the time when celebrated British and American architects and theorists were advocating a historicizing, nostalgic, anti-modernist aesthetic of the sort that had so oppressed him in Holland. The Architectual Association set itself up as a bastion of anti-postmodernism, and Koolhaas loathed the "deep and fundamental hostility to modernity" in the architectural discourse of the day. Giving in to an infatuation with "asphalt, traffic, neon, crowds, tension," he cast about for a way to "recuperate" modernity and modernism, but not by reclaiming the sleek steel-and-glass or exposed-concrete monoliths under attack by the postmodernists. He mined a different—and itself repressed—strain of modernism: its ecstatic, surrealist side, which he liked for "its popularity, its vulgarity, its hedonism." His architecture and his urbanism would be based on "dissociation, disconnection, and complementarity, contrast, rupture." He wanted to "understand the city no longer as a tissue but more as a 'mere' coexistence."

Koolhaas found a refuge in the designs and the theories of the British architects Alison and Peter Smithson, with whom he later admitted to being "in a one-way dialogue" for years. The Smithsons' work drew from the rhythms, practices, and energy of everyday urban, suburban, and even rural life. One of their projects proposed leaving most of postwar Berlin in rubble, with only roadways cleared to serve as the infrastructure for a new city, reachable by escalator one level up. This downtown-sized megastructure consisted of towers linked by elevated pedestrian walkways, haphazardly arranged. Widely discussed and altogether unsensible, such urban ideas also drove the Smithsons' (mostly unbuilt) architecture—self-conscious modesty; uncanny combinations of the detritus of postwar London; unfinished, low-cost materials; the optical vibrancy of contemporary advertising; and the grittiness of the East End slum. Their aesthetic was contrived to provoke, to force people to think about the condition of living in a perpetually modernizing society, to reflect upon their locations in that world.

Koolhaas, repelled on the one hand by the overly rationalized and nostalgically precious Holland and the prevalent anti-modernist discourse of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and seduced on the other hand by the works of Constant and the Smithsons, became ever more infatuated with the metropolis as the locus of modernity and the place for the modern subject's self-actualization. Only the city, he believed, symbolizes and lays bare the psychic conditions of modernity; and only its urban forms embody modernity's rapid cycling through historical shifts. Not for nothing is his firm called the Office for *Metropolitan* Architecture.

Over decades, Koolhaas has developed a remarkably consistent social and architectural vision to create a

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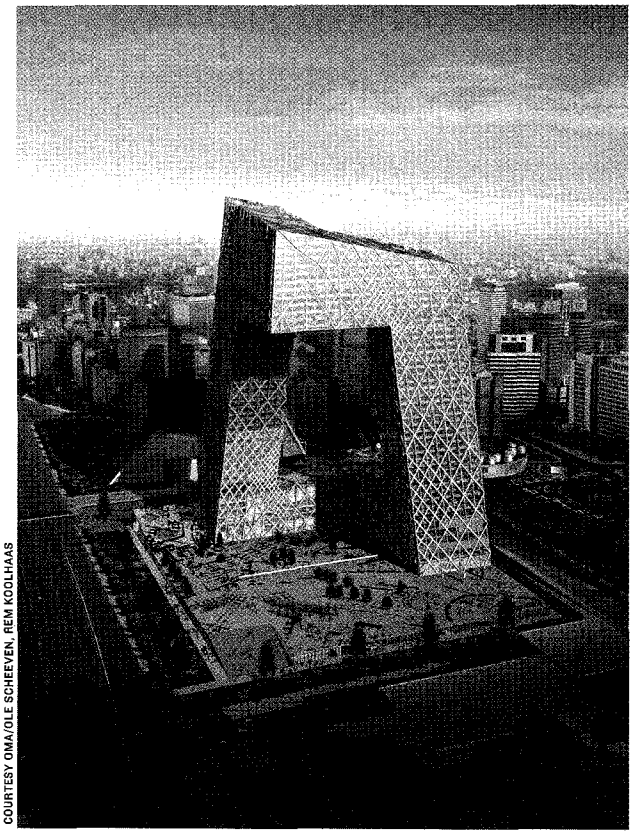
constellation of innovative and consistently surprising small and mid-scale buildings. The Villa dall'Ava in Paris, completed in 1991, is flat-out brilliant: into a long, extremely narrow site in the sedate suburban enclave of St. Cloud, he introduced an urbane riff on Le Corbusier's famous Villa Savoye of 1929 (also outside Paris). The husband wanted a transparent house into which no neighbor could see; the wife wanted a house with almost no kitchen to speak of (she didn't like to cook) and a swimming pool on the roof. Koolhaas, with few other projects in the office, luxuriated for several years in the multiple paradoxes of the commission: a couple with grand patronage aspirations but a modest budget; a home absent a hearth; a transparent dwelling opaque to the world; a heav rooftop swimming pool supported by a fragile glass pavilion.

Organizing the entire design of the house are oppositions of high-end leather and honky-tonk plastic, plywood, and exposed concrete; of transparency and opacity, lightness and heaviness, density and porosity, visibility and invisibility. One bedroom block, clad in corrugated aluminum, perches on improbably long, skinny concrete columns, raising the second floor up to give the clients a better view of the Eiffel Tower, which is on axis with the rooftop lap pool. Using skewed geometry, ramps, indoor and outdoor staircases, and a riot of materials, textures, and multicolored surfaces, Koolhaas created an enormous sense of restlessness in what is ultimately a small suburban house. The three members of the household—the couple and their daughter—can look voyeuristically in on one another, as if they were passersby on a crowded Parisian street.

In subsequent and larger buildings, such as the Kunsthal in Rotterdam (1992), the Educatorium of Utrecht University (1997), and the Seattle Public Library (2004), Koolhaas expanded upon principles first materialized in the Villa dall'Ava. To accentuate his developing sense of multi-directional dynamism, he began to carve, from neutral gridded containers, unusually shaped voids—as in the auditorium of the Educatorium, in which the ceiling plane gently slopes down as it inches toward the back of the room, then takes a tight U-turn dive to become the room's floor. Often surrounding such voids are the building's pathways, corridors, and rooms, which cut vertically, horizontally, and diagonally into or through the space. One routinely looks onto others heading somewhere else, each place a way station to the next epiphany in an ever-changing metropolis. When you enter a relatively small, somewhat sequestered exhibition gallery in the Rotterdam Kunsthal, you land atop a gridded steel plate of the kind covering below-grade drainage systems in many cities. Your gaze is caught not just by the art on the walls, but also by the art-gazers in a gallery below—who, unnervingly, are looking up at you. These buildings grab from Surrealism, popular culture, and in-crowd allusions to modernist landmarks and heroes, all wrapped in an actually or apparently pedestrian palette of unfinished plywood, raw concrete, exposed steel, corrugated metal and plastic, and unpainted gypsum board. Contemplative, restful spaces are rare.



COURTESY OMA/OLE SCHEEVEN, REM KOOLHAAS

CCTV Tower Station and Headquarters, Beijing

KOOLHAAS'S DEEP-SEATED conviction that architecture and urban design are of a piece is altogether correct. From Constant's New Babylon, and from the Smithsons, he found his way to a new kind of architecture; and from them he also constructed an urban model that he hopes, in the Smithsons' words, will "drag a rough poetry" out of the contemporary city. But it hasn't. There is a problem here, or at least a paradox. Koolhaas's urban-inspired approach to design makes for exhilarating architecture, but for desolating cities. The problem lies in the nature of his urban visions themselves, and in how he has evolved them. His urban public spaces are relentlessly urban. But they are not very public.

This failing may be seen in his wrongheaded assumption that he can conceptualize the problems of the built environment along the single dimension of scale, from S to M to L to XL (one of his most famous books, published by Monacelli Press, is titled *S, M, L, XL*). This ignores the reality that urban design requires the architect to address a range of considerations fundamentally different from those of building a building. If the architect is to be guardian of the public realm, he needs to recognize that architecture and urban design are both interdependent and distinct, with the critical distinction lying precisely in the urban designer's need to conceptualize the possibilities not just of private revelations but also, and more importantly, of the public world, and of the relationship between these overlapping but distinct domains.

Koolhaas's urban designs, like his buildings, do amplify the city's discordant rhythms, its dissonances, disjunctures, oppositions, ambiguities. Even for the small and delicately balanced city of Oslo, even for the sprawling suburban Almere (a rapidly growing suburb of Amsterdam), he maintains that today's built environment "must incarnate uncertainty," and include forms with "no architectural relation whatsoever to one another." OMA's urban designs, he asserts, replace "hierarchy with accumulation, composition with addition," so as

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to fuse "high and low, public and private, straight and bent, bloated and starved to offer a seamless patchwork of the permanently disjointed." (Such fatuousness goes very far among the architectural *cognoscenti*.)

One would like to overlook such oracular nonsense, except that OMA has been doing urban work for close to three decades, and its executed projects do not make it easy to do so. The office's first full-scale master plan to be completed, in 1994, was for Euralille, a transportation hub and urban complex in Lille, France. The French government hired Koolhaas in 1988 to create a hub around the TGV at the new high-speed train line's first European stop out of the Chunnel. OMA's master plan includes a convention center, a train station, business offices, retail shops, public services, parking, and housing, some designed by other well-known architects whom Koolhaas helped to select and, in some cases, with whom he collaborated.

Koolhaas's own convention center, set apart from the rest of the development, creatively re-interprets a familiar (and usually monstrous) architectural type, marshalling low-cost materials into a sophisticated, artful composition. Yet in the Euralille master plan itself one is hard-pressed to find anything good. Its architectural centerpiece, a collaboration between Koolhaas and Jean Nouvel (officially designed by Nouvel), is an enormous polygonal shopping mall, the Carrefour, punctuated with four residential towers. Forming the site's opposite edge is the train station and, straddling the train tracks, a perfectly unremarkable office building by Christian Portzamparc. An apparently accidental, or at least barely designed, void between these buildings and the mall offers the only conceivable moment of outdoor public space. The Carrefour's scale, the design, and the overall detailing deliberately flouts medieval Lille, which begins across the street. The mall is a flat, monotonous, interiorized steel-and-glass beached whale, stretched along 1,100 feet of a multi-lane road.

Explaining OMA's master plan, Koolhaas disdains Lille's residents and the existing fabric of the place. Euralille's scale or lack of it, its public space or lack of it, does not matter, because the project takes its cues not from pedestrians but from the train and auto travelers speeding by. "What is important about this place," he has declared, "is not where it is, but where it leads, and at what pace—in other words, to what extent it belongs to the rest of the world." Pedestrian public space matters less because, like it or not, everyday life in a contemporary city is an entirely privatized and private affair—a shopping expedition, perhaps a meal at a restaurant.

Today, in all manner of buildings and master plans, on an ever-increasing scale, Koolhaas is reprising Euralille's principles. His master plan for Almere offers a concrete view of his current urban design practices, since some parts of it are finished and others are nearing completion. Almere was created in 1976 as a Dutch version of an early postwar American suburb, serving those wanting to escape the extreme density of Dutch urban living. Yet in eighteen years only one shopping strip had opened, so in 1994 city officials hired OMA to create a master plan for a new town center containing a business district, high-rise residential towers, retail space, and cultural amenities.

Predictably, OMA opted for high density, leaving empty half the downtown sites available for development. Office towers line the commuter-rail tracks in what Koolhaas prophesied would be "an instant skyline." A theater, a library, and a museum, segregated from the business district, again offer an architectural petting zoo designed by high-profile architects, including Kazuyo Sejima of SANAA and the Briton Will Alsop. "The plan is an attack on everything that Almere is," OMA writes. "Almere is low, the plan is high; Almere is a grid, the plan is full of diagonals; Almere is low density; the plan is high density." As city officials and OMA were refining the master plan, municipal authorities implored Koolhaas to orient the new downtown toward the large artificial lake at the town's existing center. Koolhaas resisted. Why, he asked, "should a view over water be more interesting than a view over the city?"

For its own architectural contribution, OMA chose to design a nearly 258,000-square-foot cineplex and shopping mall, smaller than Lille's Carrefour but equally monumental and interiorized, with the exception of its ground-level corner entrance. Block 6 (as the building is called), like Lille's Carrefour, is the pivotal moment in the new downtown. Koolhaas predicts that Block 6 will create a "congestive combination of all urban activities." The design relies on the usual Koolhaasian tropes, sectional diagonals and multi-level voids cut through and linking stacked floor planes.

In these and other master plans, Koolhaas trenchantly articulates a critique of prevailing theories of urban and suburban design that continue to dominate discussions of the contemporary city. Before he came on the scene, urban theory was bifurcated into two equally unsatisfying alternatives. On one side was the highly touted and extremely popular New Urbanism, currently coursing through the debates about the reconstruction of New Orleans. On the other side was the original target of New Urbanism, mainstream modernism's parklands striated with mid-rise residential and high-rise business buildings. Koolhaas openly scorns the New Urbanism's re-packaging of late nineteenth-century suburban visions and its tendency to spawn nostalgically historicist architecture. Neither does he have much truck with the mainstream modernist urbanism, which is fundamentally anti-urban as well.

When Koolhaas began Euralille in 1988, in other words, he strode solo into a gaping conceptual void in discussions of the future of the built environment. Rightly, Koolhaas insists that architects and urban designers, in their refusal to confront contemporary urban and exurban landscapes as they exist and as they are developing, have abdicated their professional duty to shape—to be guardians of—the public realm. Rightly, he demands that his colleagues pragmatically acknowledge that the public will no longer largely defer to the "expert" judgments of urban planners and designers, and architects and urban designers will never again control that many of the forces shaping the built environment. Rightly, he acknowledges the unlikelihood that single designers or firms will be handed the political power to construct a Great Society on ten or twenty square blocks of urban land.

Koolhaas has forced a polarized discussion to give way to a suppler array of approaches. Recently, and partly under his influence, a more promising urban design philosophy has emerged that advocates high- and medium-density, and above all mixed-use, neighborhoods. Contemporary architects and urban designers also now concede that they must work with the landscapes of late moder-

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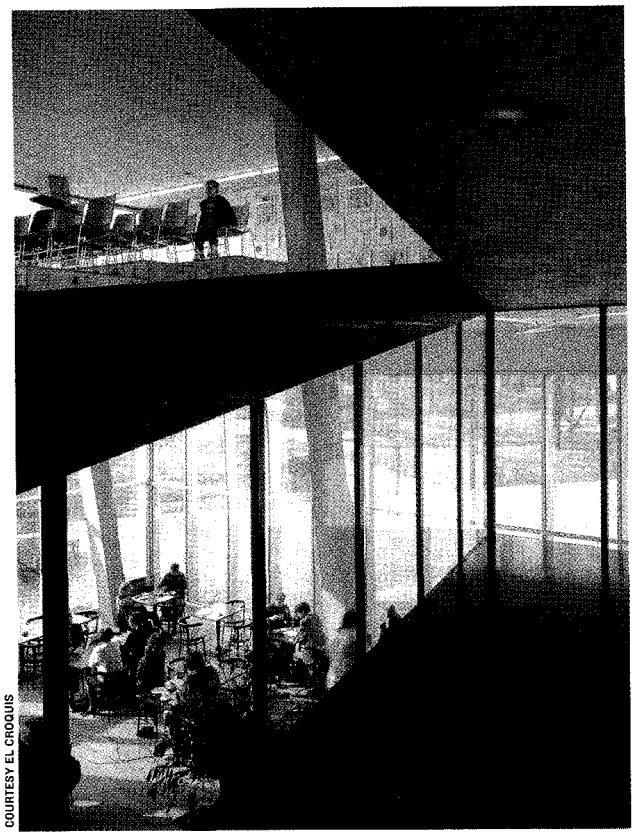
nity that many would prefer to ignore, such as edge cities, brownfields, the non-residential parts of urban and suburban sprawl (including the cavernous anonymity of "big-box" buildings), and the almost phantasmal megalopolitan growth taking place in developing parts of the world, especially in Asia.

However prescient, however correct Koolhaas's criticisms of contemporary architecture and urbanism have been, there is little wisdom to be found in his own proposed solutions. Dividing the S and M of his houses and small- and medium-sized institutional or cultural buildings from the L and XL of his megastructures and urban designs is an unrecognized gulf along three dimensions: economic, experiential, and social. This gulf makes OMA's vision for contemporary urbanism a highly imprudent guide for urban designers wrestling with the twenty-first-century built landscape.

Taking the economic dimension first, consider Koolhaas's current infatuation with the Very Large Building. Perhaps some of these OMA-designed or -inspired buildings will become striking urban landmarks. But many of them, including Almere's Block 6, will likely encounter the same unhappy fortunes as the Carrefour in Lille. Shopping malls are, as Koolhaas himself puts it, autistic—they are difficult to connect to the surrounding landscape. And gathering too many urban elements into one very big building puts control over too much physical space in too few hands. If these hands happen to be private, as is usually the case, maximizing investment bulldozes over civic interests. Exacerbating this is the possibility that the economic fortunes of the building's proprietor, private or public, might plummet. Then maintenance will be deferred, businesses might fail, and the whole complex will begin to look downtrodden. Every city encounters variability in growth and decline. In highly visible, prominently located structures, even small downturns can be amplified into disasters. You do not have to embrace Jane Jacobs's largely anti-modern critique of postwar urban redevelopment to recognize that the kernel of truth in her thinking applies to Koolhaas's cities as well.

An even more insurmountable problem is how people will relate to Koolhaas's XL buildings. He deems considerations of composition, scale, proportion, materials, and details irrelevant, insisting that "the *art* [my italics] of architecture is useless" today, since the "world is more and more dominated by quantity." Yet the tools that Koolhaas dismissively consigns to architecture's art are precisely the tools by which the designer shapes a person's experience of the built world. Does this building make me feel big or small? Does it seem cold or warm, forbidding or inviting? Does it contain things I want to touch, sit on, think about, or explore? In his S and M buildings, Koolhaas lavishly attends to such experiential considerations, but in his L and XL projects he does not. He fails to recognize that even if one could design a megastructure through the "art of architecture," its execution would be unlikely, because the economic conditions under which such projects are developed and leased would probably prohibit the architect from executing these more subtle design elements.



COURTESY EL CROQUIS

The Kunsthal, Rotterdam

And more disturbing still in OMA's "new urban paradigm" are the social problems that it fails to address. Koolhaas has demonstrated that in the art of high architecture, a blunt acceptance of contemporary economic, social, and cultural conditions can be thrilling. In the art of urban design, however, deference to these same conditions amounts to political complacency. No matter what Koolhaas claims, in his XL buildings and urban designs he abdicates his ethical responsibility to be the guardian of the public realm, because, in his view, "demarcations [such as public and private] no longer exist." He writes that "I think we are still stuck with this idea of the street and the plaza as a public domain, but the public domain is radically changing . . . with television and the media and a whole series of other inventions, you could say that the public domain is lost. But you could also say it's now so pervasive it does not need physical articulation any more." In Almere's city center, like Euralille before it, the principal public act is to shop. For Almere's master plan, OMA brags that it abided by "Alberti's ancient exhortation to view the 'state' [public] and the 'house' [private] as interchangeable."

Predictions of the demise of the public realm have a long history in urbanist discourse. Thankfully, they are plainly untrue. Today's public realm is neither the Greek agora nor an economic or ethnic elite's privileged domain. Today's publics—the plural is significant—do lack an adequate conceptual paradigm to facilitate their spatial realization, but whatever the outcome of our need for a new paradigm of "publicness," neither globalization, nor digital media, nor high-speed international trains, nor a culture of consumption, renders moot the fundamental fact that publics are made by people, living with and bumping into one another, mostly on the ground.

No longer just the steps in front of city hall, today's public realm is indoor and outdoor, political, social, commercial, leisure, institutional. Today's public realms need to offer an overlapping as well as a colliding complex of hetero-

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geneous environments, and to facilitate unexpected encounters with unfamiliar classes and communities of people pursuing ends that might differ greatly from one's own. Only in such places might we recognize our plurality and our commonality, and interact with others in ways that encourage us to see ourselves through their eyes, and to see ourselves as members of multiple communities, chosen, inherited, and constructed. Such places might include shopping malls, but they cannot be only shopping malls, even if malls were somehow not designed to channel a targeted and usually homogeneous group of consumers.

In Koolhaas's hands, architecture and urban design are not just intermeshed, they are also conflated. His current work is giving physical form to an urban vision that has haunted him, in his mind's eye, for decades. But is it wise? Is it right? Is it socio-critical, as he maintains? If we consider his stated aims for his architecture, his abiding interest in Surrealism, and his accession to extravagant proclamations about the death of the public realm, OMA's occasional insistence upon the publicness of its master plans ("Let Almere be a place of maximum public interaction!") seems less than sincere. OMA proudly describes as Piranesian the Carrefour's spaces, intimating that they create the same sense of alienating solitude that the eighteenth-century Italian architect captured in his famous *Carcerci* engravings. But they depicted prisons! This and other such comments, Almere and other such urban designs, demonstrate the deep and unfortunate affinity of Koolhaas's architecture with his urban designs.

Even in the most public spaces, Koolhaas's true subject is the modern subject's inner musings. His urban universe asks no more of public spaces than that they stimulate private epiphanies, moments of philosophical reverie in which the alienated individual in the city might contemplate his finitude and his irrelevance among the teeming spectacle of urban life. This vision has issued in some show-stopping buildings, where the celebration of private truths is appropriate. Yet to apply it to today's panoply of conurbations is disastrously to conflate public with private, to make the public private and the private public. In the Koolhaasian city people are never really alone, but neither are they ever really together. ■

Damon Linker
The Philosopher and Everyone Else

READING LEO STRAUSS: POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY, JUDAISM
By Steven B. Smith
(University of Chicago Press, 256 pp., $32.50)

LEO STRAUSS AND THE THEOLOGICO-POLITICAL PROBLEM
By Heinrich Meier
(Cambridge University Press, 183 pp., $60)

I.

Of the many émigré scholars to leave a mark on American intellectual life in the latter half of the twentieth century, none has sparked greater controversy than Leo Strauss. In the years since his death, in 1973, he has repeatedly been accused of exercising a sinister influence on the country. At first he faced the general charge of having used a series of academic appointments at such institutions as the New School for Social Research and the University of Chicago to spread elitist and anti-democratic ideas throughout the nation. By the mid-1990s, journalists had determined that this author of dense commentaries on Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, Judah Halevi, Machiavelli, and Spinoza should be considered the "intellectual godfather to the Contract with America." Then, in the most recent and most concentrated journalistic treatment of his writings and influence, Strauss was described as the philosophical founder of neoconservatism and the primary inspiration behind the Bush administration's goal of democratizing the Middle East through military force. Combine these ostensibly serious allegations with the risible charge that Strauss, a Jewish refugee from Nazism, was "a Jewish Nazi" (this repulsive charge was made by Shadia Drury)—or that he proposed that the state should "fry" criminals "before they break the law" (this was Brent Staples's contribution to the discussion)—and one begins to appreciate just how much animosity has come to surround this seemingly unassuming professor of political philosophy.

Strauss has never lacked for defenders. Indeed, one of the many controversies surrounding his legacy involves his remarkable success in founding a self-perpetuating school of intensely loyal followers who proudly describe themselves as "Straussians." During every flare-up of popular hostility to Strauss, his students (and students of students, and students of students of students) can be counted on to compose dutifully indignant articles and letters in defense of their teacher. Most of these essays profess astonishment that such a modest scholar could inspire so much hatred and misunderstanding. As his daughter, the classicist Jenny Strauss Clay of the University of Virginia, put it in *The New York Times* a few years ago, Strauss was merely a bookish academic whose truest passion was "to spend his life raising rabbits ... and reading Plato." Such testimony makes for touching reading, but it is of little use in helping readers to form a more balanced view of the man and his place in intellectual history.

Steven B. Smith's book is a response to Strauss's critics, and it far surpasses previous efforts in clarity, rigor, and judiciousness. Smith is not an acolyte propagating the true faith; he is an admirer who wishes to persuade his readers of Strauss's intellectual importance. This balance between sympathy and critical distance, lamentably rare in studies of Strauss, contributes to making this book our best introduction to the complex and challenging ideas of this divisive figure.

Where most commentators—Straussian and anti-Straussian alike—have emphasized the conservative political implications of Strauss's thought, Smith maintains that his subject was primarily

Damon Linker's book, THE THEOCONS: SECULAR AMERICA UNDER SIEGE, *will be published by Doubleday in September.*

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an apolitical thinker—"a philosopher" who "had no politics in the sense in which that term is generally meant." In Smith's view, Strauss focused on political questions in his writing and teaching not because he wished to pursue an ideological agenda, but because he believed that the ultimately irresolvable problems and unanswerable questions that arise from political life—about good and evil, justice and injustice, right and wrong, noble and base—reflect the "many-sidedness or heterogeneity of being," and so demonstrate the severe limits of human understanding. Smith's Strauss is a Socratic skeptic who believed that political philosophy culminates in wisdom that amounts to "knowledge of what we do not know or knowledge of the limits of knowledge."

Smith maintains, a little startlingly, that Strauss's self-limiting skepticism puts him in the company of the twentieth century's greatest liberals, such as Isaiah Berlin, Lionel Trilling, Walter Lippman, Raymond Aron, and Judith Shklar—thinkers who placed the awareness of social and moral complexity at the center of their political theories and championed a modest but confident "liberalism without illusions." In Smith's account, Strauss's distinctive contribution to this tradition of thought is the epistemological lesson that liberal democracy is "the regime most consonant with the partial, incomplete, and even contradictory nature of knowledge."

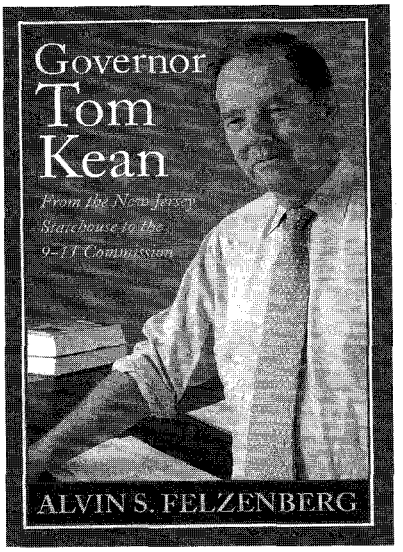
After so many seasons of hysterical accusations and pious apologetics, Smith's thoughtful and highly unorthodox account of Strauss's thought serves as a welcome corrective to the extremism so often practiced by his critics and defenders. Above all, Smith deserves credit for injecting some much-needed sobriety and freshness into the discussion of Strauss's work and its legacy. Whether Smith's book deserves to be the final word on Strauss's ideas is another matter.

II.

SMITH'S INTERPRETATION TAKES off from a well-known statement by Strauss that "*the* theme of my investigations" is the "theologico-political problem"—the problem that flows from the need for every human being to make an existential choice between reason and revelation, Athens and Jerusalem, as rival alternatives for the best way of life. On one side, revelation demands absolute obedience to divine authority. Although this alternative will show itself most vividly in the lives of orthodox believers, who explicitly appeal to Scripture and the edicts of religious institutions for authoritative guidance on how to live, Strauss maintained that a version of it presents itself to all human beings, provided that they are citizens of a political community.

All politics, according to Strauss, demands obedience to the laws of a particular community, whether those laws have democratic, republican, oligarchic, aristocratic, monarchical, tyrannical, or theocratic origins. Citizens will obey the law for many reasons. A few will do so out of fear of getting caught and being punished for transgressions. Others might make a rational calculation that one's own obedience is an acceptable price to pay for the benefit of social peace that results from widespread law-abidingness. But the vast majority, according to Strauss, will obey for another reason: they assume that the laws under which they live are good and just in themselves, regardless of the positive or negative consequences that follow from upholding them. All laws, in other words, rest on quasi-theological presuppositions whose truth the vast majority of people living under them unreflectively assume.

The laws of the United States, for example, are founded on belief in the existence of natural rights. Strauss indicates that whether or not American citizens conceive of these rights as grounded in the God of the Bible, the God of eighteenth-century deism, or no god at all—and even if they have personally given no thought at all to the grounds of their rights—most Americans think and act in ways that demonstrate that they believe such rights exist, and that it is just plain wrong to transgress them, regardless of the practical consequences of doing so. Strauss describes this primeval sense of restraint (or "man's natural conscience") as arising out of a nearly universal experience of "sacred awe" or a "divination" that "the full and unrestrained exercise of ... freedom is not right"—that, in Smith's words, "not everything is permissible." All political law, in other words, presupposes or points toward the existence of a divine law underlying it, providing it with a metaphysical foundation that bestows upon it a sense of intrinsic rightness.



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Strauss's distinctive contribution to political reflection is the supremely questionable assertion that all politics is, at bottom, theological politics.

THE MOST ELECTRIFYING CHAPTERS of Strauss's most famous book, *Natural Right and History*, which appeared in 1953, discuss this primordial revelation of divine law and then trace the emergence in ancient Athens of a diametrically alternative outlook—the radically skeptical outlook of reason and philosophy. Whereas revelation demands absolute obedience to received authority and treats the questioning of divine law as an affront against its metaphysical source and the community that reveres it, philosophy arises out of a courageous refusal to accept the authority of divine law at face value. Noting tensions or contradictions in what the law assumes about goodness and justice, the philosopher uses reason to subject it to sustained examination, the point of which is to determine if it truly is noble, good, and just.

Reason and revelation represent radically opposed existential possibilities. Revelation treats all questions as answered, all problems as settled. Philosophy, by contrast, is motivated and continually renewed by doubt. As Smith writes, summarizing Strauss's view of philosophy's original (by which he means Socratic) self-understanding, it was the "peculiar heroism of philosophy to live with ... uncertainty and to resist the attractions of absolutist positions in both politics and philosophy." The Socratic philosopher rigorously stakes out and maintains a position "of detachment, of a certain ironic distance from the world of politics and the partisanships that it engenders." As Strauss put it in one of the most widely quoted passages of his exchange with Alexandre Kojève in *On Tyranny*:

> Philosophy as such is nothing but genuine awareness of the problems, i.e., of the fundamental and comprehensive problems. It is impossible to think about these problems without becoming inclined toward a solution, toward one or the other of the very few typical solutions. Yet as long as there is no wisdom but only quest for wisdom, the evidence of all solutions is necessarily smaller than the evidence of the problems. Therefore the philosopher ceases to be a philosopher at the moment at which the "subjective certainty" of a solution becomes stronger than his awareness of the problematic character of that solution. At that moment the sectarian is born.

Philosophy for Strauss was the antithesis of every form of sectarianism.

STRAUSS'S CONCEPTION OF AN INeradicable tension between reason and "theologico-political" revelation serves as the motor behind the narrative with which nearly every Straussian teacher imparts the history of political theory to undergraduates. The story begins with "the ancients" (meaning primarily Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, but sometimes also including Aristophanes, Thucydides, and Xenophon), who are said to have engaged in trans-political, trans-historical, and trans-religious philosophical reflection on eternal human questions. What is love? What is friendship? What is justice? Is it good? What is beautiful? What happens to us when we die? Is there a God, and, if so, what might he want from us? What is the best way of life for a human being?

According to Strauss, the ancients posed these questions with unsurpassed analytical force and rigor, but they also did so in such a way as to leave the civic pieties of ancient Athens largely intact. They showed, in other words, that it was possible to live a philosophical life of radical questioning, and to lead potential philosophers toward such a life, without publicly challenging the revelations that are coeval with politics. They accomplished this remarkable feat by developing and employing a multileveled form of rhetoric that enabled them, in effect, to convey different things to different types of people. The vast majority of readers conclude from reading Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's treatises that they were written by well-intentioned moralists, not by radical skeptics. Although their work contains far-reaching criticisms of various aspects of ancient Greek life and worship, those criticisms appear to be undertaken in the name of reforming, even perfecting, these moral opinions. Yet the rarest readers—readers possessed of the greatest intellectual acuity, courage, and stamina—will be led to a very different conclusion from the same texts. Following discreet hints and suggestions, these privileged readers will be led to see that the apparent moralism of the texts is in fact a subterfuge meant to conceal a far more sweeping criticism of common moral opinion and its unexamined pieties.

This is Strauss's notorious doctrine of esoteric writing, which he claimed to have single-handedly recovered from scholarly obscurity by following through on hints and suggestions in the writings of such authors as the eighteenth-century critic and dramatist Lessing, the medievals Maimonides and al-Farabi, and Plato himself, in the *Phaedrus* and the *Seventh Letter*. As Strauss describes it in *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1952), esotericism was primarily an expression of philosophical prudence. It protected society at large from the acids of skepticism and doubt unleashed by philosophical questioning, while simultaneously protecting philosophers from the righteous indignation of citizens who (rightly) suspect that such questioning undermines belief in the gods of the political community and thus corrupts the virtue of its citizens. Socrates, remember, was charged with atheism and corrupting the young, and this was never far from Strauss's mind. In his view, Socrates's fate stands as a paradigm of the inevitable antagonism between the claims of philosophy and of theological politics. It is an antagonism that only the subterfuges of esotericism are capable of mediating.

IN STRAUSS'S TELLING OF WESTern history, early modern political philosophy broke radically from this ancient prudence regarding the necessarily antithetical relation between theory and practice. Instead of engaging in the pursuit of wisdom for its own sake and leaving politics and religion largely untouched, as the ancients had done, the modern philosophers set out to use theory to "enlighten" the world at large by placing philosophy at the service of practical ends. The motivation for doing so varied considerably from thinker to thinker, but the enterprise was essentially the same. And Strauss harbored severe reservations about it. He did not believe that philosophical reflection should be used to benefit humanity.

Although he treated the United States with genuine respect and affection, considering it the finest flower of modernity, he worried that his adoptive

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homeland would prove incapable of resisting the many forms of modern degradation swirling around and within it. America, he taught, sits precariously at the top of a very steep and very slippery slope ultimately leading toward historicism, relativism, and finally nihilism. This modern slide into decadence began with Rousseau, who likened human nature to an archaeological ruin of which the features had been almost completely effaced by the ravages and corruptions of time, society, and civilization. No wonder, then, that after Rousseau, "history" took the place of an eternal human nature as the standard by which individual and collective human actions were judged. Hegel, Marx, and their many lesser followers in the mid–nineteenth century developed this historicism into a novel form of philosophical reflection that denied any possibility of permanent human truths.

In Strauss's account, it was Nietzsche who exposed the sham of such thinking, revealing the half-hidden, unexamined moral beliefs lurking behind the historical turn away from natural standards of morality. Nietzsche insisted that the proper response to the discovery of modernity's hidden democratic moralism was a far more radical break from common moral opinion—one in which philosophers and statesmen were explicitly encouraged to go "beyond good and evil." What Strauss calls the final, Nietzschean "wave" of modernity culminates in philosophy regaining the autonomy it lost at the start of the modern project, but at an enormous cost. Nietzsche's "philosophers of the future" practice an anarchic, Dionysian, artistic-creative autonomy that has nothing to do with ancient philosophy's sober contemplation of a permanent natural order. In Nietzsche's thought, the only permanent things are the blind impulses of the will to power and the formless chaos out of which it emerges. It is in this way that the modern attempt to provide theoretical guidance for human practice ultimately self-destructs, leaving humanity cut off from any and all sacred restraints ("God is dead") and lacking any philosophical substitute for them.

This is what Strauss considers to be the inevitably self-devouring dynamic of modernity. It can be traced through Western intellectual history since the eighteenth century, from the confident rationalism of the Enlightenment to the self-canceling skepticism of postmodernism. It likewise marks the political history of Europe during the past two hundred years, from the idealistic bloodletting of the French Revolution to the nihilistic mass murders of Hitler. Strauss even believed it had begun to seep into American higher education during the 1950s and 1960s, where he detected it in the work of his fellow political scientists. His conviction that American academics were unknowingly furthering nihilism in the United States led him to produce some of the most ridiculous writings of his career, in which he deployed heavy European-philosophical artillery against unarmed practitioners of public-opinion-survey research, absurdly denouncing them for "fiddling while Rome burns." Decades later, his student Allan Bloom updated this hysteria, with improbable—and deeply ironic—popular success, in *The Closing of the American Mind*.

III.

SMITH IS AT HIS MOST ORIGINAL when discussing how Strauss conceived of the relationship between philosophy and its rival, revelation. Most studies of Strauss insist that he refused to take a side in the perennial conflict between them, preferring to treat the clash as one of the "permanent problems" of human life. A smaller number of scholars point to passages in Strauss's work that seem to indicate that the worth of philosophy stands or falls by its ability to demonstrate its superiority over revelation. And since Strauss never wrote a single word to indicate that he considered religious orthodoxy to be a viable alternative for himself (and on one occasion described Judaism as a "heroic delusion"), these scholars infer that Strauss must have thought that philosophy could definitively refute revelation, even if he left behind few clues about how such a refutation could proceed.

Smith stakes out a unique position in this crucial debate. He concedes something to each side. Employing an unintentionally misleading term of art, Smith describes Strauss as a "fideist skeptic." Instead of indicating that Strauss, like Pierre Bayle, was driven by reason's impotence to make a leap into religious faith, Smith employs the phrase to mean the exact opposite. Strauss, he maintains, sided unequivocally with rational philosophy against revelation, but he did so on the basis of a leap of faith into atheism. Not only does philosophy not need to refute revelation; its wisdom rests in part on the realization that such a refutation is both impossible and unnecessary. All genuine philosophers eventually come to recognize that philosophy "rests on faith, on an act of will," and not on any putative capacity to eliminate the possibility of God or revelation.

The existential outlook of the philosopher thus cannot be said to be truer than that of the committed believer in the biblical God. Rather than basing the goodness of philosophy on its possession of an account of human nature and the natural world that excludes the divine, Smith's Strauss implies that the life of

Watch

Which tense do you want to live in?
—Osip Mandelstam

I'll tell you what I've seen
since shyness is no virtue,
and there's no point in being
shy where God can see you.

(But eyes could be as dangerous
as they are precious—witnesses
in whites, viable in darkness;
potato sprouts, poisonous.
Rub them out! Or they'll leaf.
Be their light; they'll feed you.)

It's a reflection that I saw,
a flare you stared at.
Your eyes may be an ordinary
human's, a feline's, a monster's.
What matters isn't that I care,
but what I saw you watch.

I tell you, I'm expecting—
not what you think.
When darkness could not hold
itself, *as if* flared through:

as if there were no tense,
and prophecies were/are/will be.
As if my life leaned close and found me
wanting—more—expectantly.

MURIEL NELSON

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rational contemplation and reflection is best, for those capable of living it, because it is the most pleasurable life. Finally Strauss's defense of philosophy is based, for Smith, "on a form of hedonism—a higher hedonism, to be sure, but one that can only be confirmed by the pleasure felt by the philosopher alone."

SMITH'S PORTRAYAL OF STRAUSS as a defender of philosophical hedonism is crucial to his broader attempt at depoliticizing and liberalizing Strauss. By treating philosophy as a source of intellectual pleasure instead of as a means to reaching a final truth that would call into question the views professed by other ways of life, Smith's Strauss leaves political and religious pieties intact. Philosophers affirm skepticism, believers advocate faith in God, statesmen treat the laws of their political community as sacred, and none of these divergent outlooks can be said to refute the others. Each of them exists in a state of productive and irreconcilable tension with the others. The human condition would seem to be profoundly pluralistic.

Then there are the relativistic implications of Strauss's supposed hedonism. Although numerous passages in Strauss's writings imply that he believed a life of Socratic questioning to be the best way of life for human beings, Smith's interpretation suggests something else entirely. Few people, after all, consider a life of endless questioning to be supremely pleasurable. Indeed, a rich tradition of thought running from Paul through Pascal and Rousseau to Nietzsche has powerfully maintained that for the vast run of humanity, philosophical reflection produces profound misery. Philosophy would thus seem to be the best way of life only for the few who derive pleasure from philosophizing. For the others, there are other "truths."

Once again, Smith's Strauss proves to be a kind of pluralist, open to various ways of life and claims to truth, acting (in Smith's words) as a "friend of liberal democracy," affirming the "liberal values" of "toleration, open-mindedness, and skepticism," refusing to rank different human types or to look down on the competing goods affirmed by the unphilosophical multitude. Smith's Strauss deserves to be read and taught alongside the greatest anti-utopian thinkers of the twentieth century. He certainly has little to nothing in common with those conservative ideologues to whom his name has recently been attached.

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THERE IS MUCH IN HEINRICH Meier's brief but masterful study of Strauss that supports Smith's interpretation. The leading interpreter of Strauss's writings in Germany, as well as the editor of his collected works in German, Meier marshals abundant textual evidence from Strauss's corpus to demonstrate that his primary concern was indeed with the conflict between reason and revelation, and not with politics narrowly construed. Meier's preface even contains a mild rebuke to American Straussians for using their thinking and scholarship to serve partisan ends.

While the series of densely written academic essays that form the core of Meier's book are interesting and instructive, the book's greatest contribution to our understanding of Strauss's thinking can be found in two previously unpublished lectures from the 1940s that Meier includes as appendicies—particularly an essay that Strauss composed for delivery at the Hartford Theological Seminary on January 8, 1948, titled simply "Reason and Revelation," which contains some of his most concise and radical statements on the manifold tensions between the life of philosophy and the life of piety. Here Strauss writes that the Bible rejects "the possibility that man can find his happiness, or his peace, by eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge," whereas the classical philosophers "conceive of man's desire to know as his highest natural desire," thereby tacitly rejecting the biblical view that "this desire is a temptation" that must be resisted. While the philosophical view is that "man's happiness consists in free investigation or insight," the Bible maintains that "man's happiness consists in obedience to God."

Going further, Strauss states with uncharacteristic bluntness what he means by philosophic skepticism—of the sort that piety, which demands unwavering obedience to God's commandments, must absolutely reject.

> Philosophy stands or falls by the possibility of suspense of judgment regarding the most fundamental questions.... [Its skepticism involves] *looking* at things, *considering* things. Philosophy is concerned with understanding reality in all its complexity.... [It is] disputative rather than decisive. Disputation is possible only for people who are not concerned with decisions, who are not in a rush, for whom nothing is urgent except disputation.

In notes to the lecture that Meier also supplies, Strauss even goes so far as to declare that "whoever is incapable of suspending his judgment ... of *living* in such suspense, whoever fails to know that *doubt* is a good pillow for a well-constructed head, cannot be a philosopher." This is a thinker passionately committed to open-ended questioning—a thinker who, like Smith's Strauss, seems to stand shoulder to shoulder with such liberal skeptics and champions of doubt as Berlin, Trilling, and Shklar.

EXCEPT FOR ONE CRUCIALLY IMportant thing: the lecture that Meier provides for us proves beyond dispute that, all of Smith's assertions to the contrary, Strauss believed that philosophy could not settle for leaving revelation intact as an existential possibility. Philosophy is "*radically* atheistic." And to confirm the truth of this atheism, the philosopher must confront revelation's contrary claims about the world and man, with the ultimate aim of demonstrating that these claims are fundamentally false. The philosopher has no choice but to "*refute* revelation"—that is, to "prove that revelation or miracles are impossible." When it comes to philosophy, no pluralist tolerance is extended to religious faith.

Meier points to strong evidence that Strauss's entire intellectual project grew out of an effort to chart a third way between biblical faith (especially in its Christian variant) and modern unbelief, which Strauss considered to be insufficiently rigorous. Modern atheists tend to be too quick to dismiss revelation and too blind to the remnants of biblical morality in their own thinking. Hobbes, for example, repudiated many aspects of Christianity, but he failed to recognize

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New golf club's secret metal may hit too far on some par-4's.

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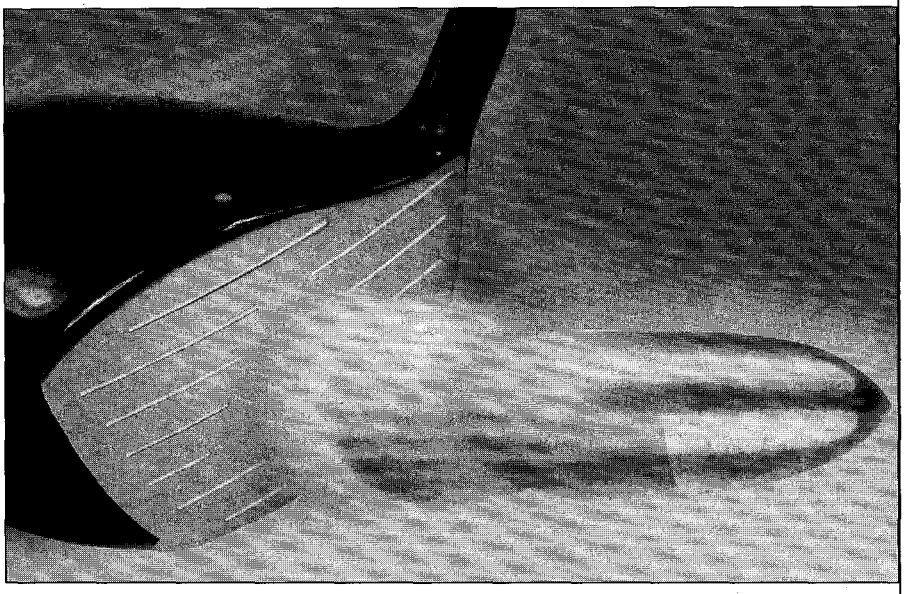

Coating on face of new golf club is 70% harder than titanium. Added power, size of head, challenge distance restrictions.

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by Charlie Allen

With that much punch a good golfer could turn some par-4's into par-3's.

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Too powerful for some par-4's

A former PGA pro who played it in California said he had to club-down to a 3-wood on several par-4's. A *21-time* Connecticut long-ball champ said of the 500 drivers he's used used over twenty years, this one hit farther with less effort than any of them. One golfer begged the company to let him take it with him for a week in Palm Springs. A low-handicapper curved several shots around imaginary dog legs 220 yards out. The club's huge sweet spot gave him more room to work the ball from toe to heel.

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Specify shaft model, right or left-handed, regular or stiff flex. S/h is $14.95 for one, two or three clubs. CT add 6% sales tax.

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the extent to which his desire to benefit humanity derived from Christian moral convictions. Marx dismissed piety as the "opiate of the masses," but he unthinkingly adhered to an ideal of egalitarian justice with Jewish and Christian origins. Heidegger described the idea of a Christian philosophy as a "square circle," but he was preoccupied with Pauline themes of existential anguish and the guilty conscience. Even Nietzsche, a master of detecting and exploding the subterranean influence of Christianity in his fellow philosophers, remained in thrall to the ideal of probity, or intellectual self-cruelty—a distinctly Christian virtue. Strauss insisted that to refute revelation—to demonstrate its impossibility—it was necessary to go beyond Nietzschean atheism, to recover an even more radical, more thoroughgoing critique of piety. That is what he claimed to have found in Socratic philosophy.

As Strauss describes it, the ancient philosophical critique of revelation and miracles surpassed its modern variant in rigor and cogency by insisting on beginning from the premises of the religious believer. Unlike early modern philosophers, who begin their thinking by assuming the impossibility of revelation and miracles, Socratic philosophy supposedly begs no questions, taking the assertions of believers with the utmost seriousness. The Socratic philosopher invites the pious man to make the strongest case he can in defense of his beliefs, and even volunteers to help him make the case even stronger. The point of this generosity is not to strengthen religious faith, but rather to prepare a thoroughgoing dialectical examination of those beliefs.

How would such an examination proceed? Strauss claims that the Socratic philosopher attempts to show the believer that he assumes, perhaps without being fully aware of it, that God must be absolutely perfect—which means, among other things, absolutely wise. Once this has been established, the philosopher then seeks to "prove that revelation or miracles are impossible," because they are "incompatible with the nature of God as the most perfect being." How can the philosopher show, on the basis of the believer's own premises, that God's wisdom is incompatible with revelation or miracles? He does so by turning his attention to the believer's views about morality—about justice, deserving, nobility, reward, and punishment—and by seeking to demonstrate that those moral views are such a tangle of contradictions that a perfectly wise being would refuse to abide by them. The philosopher denies, in other words, the "decisive and ultimate significance of *moral* criteria" for rendering wise judgments, and he thus flatly rejects the possibility that "*the* cosmic principle, or the *first* cause, is in any way concerned about morality."

Strauss's statements about the relatively low status of morality have long perplexed his conservative admirers. While he admitted that "the philosophic life, especially as Plato and Aristotle understood it, is not possible without self-control and a few other virtues," Strauss also insisted on treating those virtues as "subservient to philosophy," which he described as "not only trans-social and trans-religious, but trans-moral as well." For all of his moralistic rhetoric and impassioned denunciations of relativism, Strauss was far more radical than such contemporary academic atheists as Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, who combine professions of godlessness with conventionally liberal moral and political opinions. Strauss would insist that to demonstrate the truth of their atheism—to transform it from dogmatic opinion into knowledge—they would have to subject their moral convictions to the same degree of critical scrutiny that they typically direct against religion alone.

IV.

Although Smith provides much less detail than Meier about how Strauss's rationalist critique of moral opinion and religious belief is supposed to proceed, he gives every appearance of recognizing where it leads—namely, far beyond good and evil, at least as they are typically understood by ordinary human beings. One thus wonders why Smith denies so strenuously that Strauss advocated "the creation of an inward-looking elite that exempts itself from the moral principles applicable to the rest of humanity." If this statement merely means that Strauss did not wish to foster a sect of sociopaths who would prey on American society, then it is surely true. A central contention of ancient political philosophy is that great acts of immorality are almost always motivated either by untamed and misdirected moralism or by an immoderate desire for the intense but fleeting goods of the body (as opposed to the more enduring and ultimately more fulfilling goods of the mind). The amoral Socratic philosophers that Strauss aimed to produce would therefore be quite unlikely to see their liberation from conventional moral opinion as an opportunity to exploit or to harm their fellow citizens.

But even if we assume with Strauss that Socratic philosophers pose no practical threat, it is nonetheless true that such philosophers undeniably constitute an insular elite that does not share the moral convictions affirmed by the rest of us. (Attempting to illustrate the radical difference between philosophers and non-philosophers, Allan Bloom used to quip to his students that had Oedipus been a Socratic, he would have responded to the news that he had married his mother and murdered his father with the remark, "Small world.") Despite Smith's attempt to domesticate and transform him into some kind of pluralist liberal, the fact is that Strauss considered skepticism and doubt to be dangerously subversive of the moral opinions and prejudices that are (in Strauss's words) the "very element of human or social or political life." This is why Strauss himself never doubted for a second that philosophy "is essentially the preserve of the very few individuals who are by nature fit for philosophy," and that "the radical distinction between the wise and the vulgar is essential to the original concept of philosophy."

And so Strauss presents us with a highly original and even shocking vision of the ideal human society, marked by the starkest of contrasts and the steepest of hierarchies. At the very top is a tiny group of apolitical, amoral, atheistic philosophers who devote their lives to endless questioning of everything under the sun. Far from justify-

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ing their pursuit of wisdom in terms of the pleasure that they alone derive from it, these philosophers believe themselves to be leading "*the* right way of life," which constitutes "*the* happiness of man." And then there is, well, everyone else. Every single other way of life is "fundamentally defective," and every single non-philosopher lives a life of "misery, however splendid." The only true human difference, according to Strauss, is that between "philosophy and despair disguised by delusion." These are not, to put it mildly, the words of a Berlin-like or Trilling-like liberal.

This duality, this hierarchy of souls, is for Strauss a natural and ineradicable fact of human life. And social and political arrangements must take it into account. Hence the need for every political community to inculcate "noble lies" and other delusions to shield the defective majority of people from despair, while also, ideally, directing a few of the promising young toward a life in the philosophic elite. While the members of that elite pursue lives of radical liberation from any and all constraints, every other citizen is condemned to a life of intellectual confinement in the darkness of the perpetually closed society.

IF THIS POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT sounds familiar, it should. Strauss's writings may be dismissed by most classicists, but he was arguably the twentieth century's most consistent Platonist. Strauss was being completely sincere when he declared, in a letter to Karl Löwith in 1946, that "I *really* believe ... that the perfect political order, as Plato and Aristotle have sketched it, *is* the perfect political order." It is no wonder that such a man would go on to declare in the same letter that modern society, with its "famous atom bombs," not to mention "cities with a million inhabitants, gadgets, funeral homes, [and] 'ideologies' ... is *contra naturam*."

If Strauss added anything to the political vision of the ancient philosophers, it is the notion that modern developments have led to the creation of an even greater gap between Socratic philosophers and the remainder of the human race. In a famous allegory in Book VII of the *Republic*, Plato insisted that in all political communities, even in a utopian state governed by philosopher-kings, non-philosophers live their lives unknowingly chained to the floor of a cave, forced to gaze at shadow-images that they ignorantly mistake for reality. Philosophers are those rare individuals who come to doubt received opinions about the shadows and seek to replace those opinions with knowledge. In doing so, they liberate themselves from their confinement in the cave and ultimately ascend to the outside world of real objects bathed in the light of the sun (which in the allegory represents the Idea of the Good).

Rather than simply reviving the image and applying it to the present, Strauss insisted that Plato's allegory needed to be revised in order to take account of the uniquely pernicious influence of modernity on human self-understanding. The modern world, in Strauss's view, is the creation of the Enlightenment—a movement to spread philosophical and scientific knowledge throughout society for the sake of improving the human condition, materially, spiritually, and intellectually. Strauss believed that no authentic philosopher—no genuine wise man—would ever pursue such a goal, since it blatantly contradicts the natural order of things. The Enlightenment and the modern world to which it gave birth may claim to be philosophical, but they are in fact profoundly anti-philosophical, because they spread error and falsehood in the name of philosophy, convincing modern men and women that their liberal and democratic convictions are philosophically defensible when they are merely modernity's distinctive myth. This is why Strauss suggested in *Thoughts on Machiavelli* that Enlightenment could be more accurately described as Obfuscation.

In a world founded on such false philosophy, education toward genuine philosophy, toward Socratic philosophy, cannot proceed as it had in the premodern world, where it involved the radical questioning and examination of commonly accepted moral and religious opinions. Rather, such questioning must now be preceded by preparatory instruction that aims to bring the skeptical young back to the contemporary equivalent of the naïve moral and religious convictions of Plato's original, "natural" cave. It requires that citizens be educated away from sophisticated modern theories and disciplines, inoculated against the skepticism bred by modern scientific methodologies, to embrace simple patriotism and unthinking piety in their place. Only after this education has been completed and the young have been taught to revere God and their nation unreflectively can authentic education in radical doubt begin for the very few potential philosophers.

Some Straussians focus on the first form of instruction, creating a literate band of right-wing ideologues and moralists who revere Washington, Lincoln, and Reagan as American demigods. Others devote themselves to the second, turning out ironic hedonists who seek their pleasure in studying Platonic dialogues in the original Greek and contemplating the comedic absurdity of common moral attachments. (Bloom was one of these.) But in nearly every case, the Straussians' pedagogy presupposes their teacher's distinctive—and distinctively perverse—view of modern society: extramoral philosopher-supermen at the top, moral and religious simpletons in the vast middle, and at the very bottom, leading their fellow citizens into bondage in the cave beneath the cave, the nation's non-Straussian academics and intellectuals. Think of it as a cross between the worldviews of Bill O'Reilly and Diogenes the Cynic.

So Strauss can hardly be described as a liberal. But neither was he a conservative in any meaningful sense of the term. How has a thinker as radical as Strauss—a thinker so blatantly hostile to democracy and modernity, so deeply suspicious of political liberty and equality, so profoundly skeptical of moral and religious belief—managed to become the intellectual idol of contemporary American conservatism, with its clamorous moralism, its pious parochialism, its shameless populism, and its instinctual suspicion of doubt? Only when we have devised a satisfactory answer to that troubling question will we be capable of rendering a responsible judgment of Leo Strauss's ideas and their enigmatic legacy to the times in which we live. ■

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SAFED DIARIST

Faith Hill

"TURN RIGHT AFTER THE central bus station," says Yaffa Smolensky, a new immigrant from Phoenix, Arizona, giving me phone directions to her home. "Then look for the staircase going up the hill—if it's still there." Yaffa and her husband, Moish have counted four katyushas whizzing over their home. In the first three days of the war, Safed was one of the hardest-hit towns in the Galilee, with several dozen katyushas fired, leaving two dead and many wounded. But the Smolenskys don't intend to seek refuge farther south, as many of the town's 27,000 residents have done. Members of the Lubavitcher Hasidic movement, they run a food and clothing distribution center for Safed's poor. A neighbor arrives to say goodbye: He and his family are joining friends in a West Bank settlement. "The children are going crazy," he explains, apologetic about leaving under fire. He acknowledges the irony of seeking refuge in the West Bank: "These days, safety is relative."

YAFFA KNOWS THAT THIS IS ONE OF those moments when Jewish faith is being tested. And so, she says, she sees the challenge as a blessing. She feels especially privileged to be in Safed, a city of the medieval Kabbalists that has drawn hundreds of contemporary mystics, many of them newly Orthodox, such as she and Moish. According to tradition, she adds, the messiah will come from Safed: She notes that the war against Hezbollah began at the start of the three-week period of mourning for the Temple, a time of heightened longing for the messiah. And, says Yaffa, he's coming soon: "When evil has its back against the wall, it will fight back with all it has. The terrorists are coming out all over the world because they know their end is coming. This is their last stand."

IN THE OLD SECTION OF TOWN—centuries-old stone houses and cobblestone streets and blossoming fig trees—the messiah is everywhere. Yellow flags imprinted with the word MESSIAH hang from homes; the face of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, many of whose followers believe he will return as the messiah, appears on posters with the words WELCOME KING MESSIAH.

NOT ALL OF SAFED IS MESSIANICALLY charged: Many Russian immigrants, attracted to cheap apartments, have settled here. Yet even Safed's secularists aren't immune to the miraculous. "A katyusha hit the side of the mountain just below my house at 8:10 in the evening one night," says secular resident Moshe Rosenfeld. "And then another katyusha hit the same spot at 8:10 in the evening the next night. How should I know what it means? I'm not a prophet. But it must mean something." Perhaps what's really extraordinary is that he's still sitting on the steps of his house, refusing to budge. For all the wackiness here, the faith of Safed generates courage and good humor—precisely the qualities Israel now needs most.

ALONG WITH THE LUBAVITCHERS, THE other main Hasidic presence here is the Breslovers, whose nineteenth-century founder, Rebbe Nachman, taught that defiant joy is the essence of devotion. During prayers one evening in the Breslov synagogue, a katyusha fell so close that the building shook. Worshippers responded by praying with greater intensity. Aharon Haviv, a former scuba-diving instructor and now a Breslover Hasid, is strolling the near-deserted midday streets. In the distance is the muffled sound of Israeli artillery fire. "I'm a Jew walking in the land of Israel," he says, smiling broadly. "Why should I be afraid?" So far, no katyushas have fallen today, and besides, says Aharon, "You can't escape your fate. A grandmother and grandson were killed on the next hill. They fled from Nahariya [on the Lebanese border]. To be safe."

HE OFFERS TO TAKE ME TO MEET RABBI Elazar Mordechai Kenig, the spiritual leader of the Breslov community—"a true holy man," Aharon assures me. On our way, we pass an old man in Hasidic black, bent beneath the excessive light of the Safed sun. "You see that guy?" says Aharon. "He used to be the stage set designer for Frank Zappa."

RABBI KENIG, A HEFTY MAN WITH A gray beard and whirling sidelocks, tells me Safed's new miracle stories, such as the one about the family whose home was demolished by a katyusha on the very Sabbath they happened to be away. "Miracles are happening at every moment," he says, smiling. What about the miracles that didn't happen, I ask, like the death of the grandmother and grandson? The miracles that we are privileged to see, he responds, "are points of light that strengthen our faith. They help us say, 'All of God's ways are righteous.'" The strength of Israel, he adds, "isn't in planes or nuclear bombs, but in the spirit. We're not like the goyim. Too many Israelis think there is no difference between goyim and Jews. Look at the lust of goyim to murder us." Surely there are some good ones, I suggest. "Of course," he concedes. "But our way is not theirs. The only protection for the Jewish people is learning Torah and doing good and more good. There are no other solutions—not war and not peace."

IN A PINE FOREST OVERLOOKING TOWN is the immigrant absorption center, which was hit with three katyushas, causing one injury. The immigrants here are all Ethiopian—Falash Mura, descendants of Jews who converted to Christianity and who have returned to Judaism. An elderly man with missing teeth, wearing donated secondhand clothes, tells me he isn't afraid: God brought us home, and God will protect us.

THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER, ASHER Siyum, came from Ethiopia in 1984, at age 13, after walking across jungles to a refugee camp in the Sudan. Asher has become a hero of faith among the immigrants: One of the katyushas struck his office minutes after he left it. He shows me the office: shattered glass, unhinged doors, walls exposing insulation and wires. He points to a hole just behind his chair, marking where a katyusha fragment penetrated. "The immigrants say God must love me," he says. Yet Asher knows that true faith isn't the naïve belief that God will always protect you, but accepting any outcome as the expression of His will. "When we left our village to walk to the Sudan," he says, "my father brought a shovel. I asked him why, and he says, 'So that we'll be able to bury those who will die on the road and carry on to the land of Israel.' That's faith."

YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

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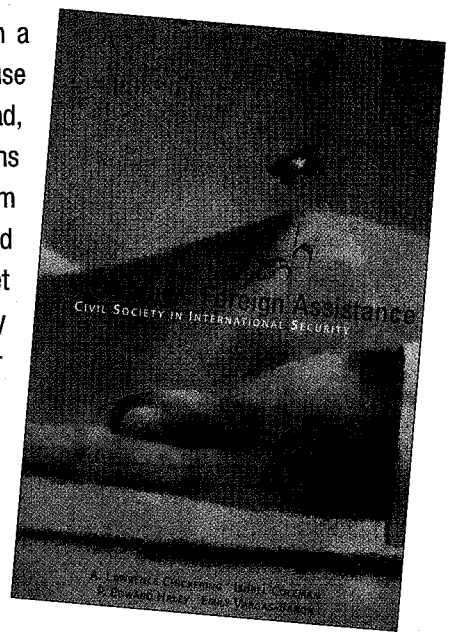

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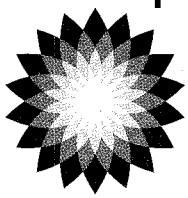

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